



**NMRSD Update
Friday, March 27, 2020**

Dear NM Community,

As we conclude the second week of our school closure, I would like to take a moment to reset.

I believe that we are at a point where we can all agree this pandemic has created a situation, unlike any other this country has seen. From an educational perspective, we have to evaluate what is most important for our students, many of whom are extremely frustrated and anxious.

However, one of my colleagues put it best this morning. We should not approach this as an educational crisis. It is a health crisis with an educational impact. We need to provide an education that is equitable and meets the needs of all students, while also being cognizant of the fact that many homes are dealing with job loss, economic hardship, and illness, all of which are accepted repercussions and will likely increase exponentially over the coming days and weeks. Yet, we also need to accept that there will be some educational loss during this extended closure and do everything we can to minimize it while ensuring that we focus on the needs of our students, not just academic, but social-emotional as well.

Our plan is to proceed with our choice boards for the week of March 30th, as originally planned and recommended by the Commissioner, while we plan to implement remote learning and more structure beginning on Monday, April 6th. This all comes at the direction of the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education Jeffrey Riley and the Senior Associate Commissioner of Education Russell Johnston, who oversees special education. They recommend the following:

- Equity (giving every student what they need to succeed) needs to be a top consideration. Remote programming does not afford schools the ability to provide the necessary support some students need.
- Nothing can replace the in-person schooling experience.
- Schools should engage students in meaningful and productive programming for approximately half the length of a regular school day.
- Schools should focus on reinforcing skills already taught this school year while allowing for application and deepening of these skills.
- Provide students with the opportunity to connect with one or more educators multiple times a week.
- To the extent possible, provide feedback on student work completed at home and it is strongly recommended that academic content be graded as “credit/no credit.”

In the meantime, I cannot thank the staff at NM enough in what they have already developed. Although working remotely, all staff have been thoroughly engaged through a variety of video platforms working hard to address the guidance that is being provided by the Department of Education and to meet the needs of their students. Also, I would like to thank Nancy Milligan, Brad Brooks, John Judge, Jeremy Hamond, and Robin Eibye for their work in supporting the staff to meet the needs of our students. Finally, thank you to all the parents and caregivers for taking on an increased responsibility while dealing with a multitude of other stressors during this extremely difficult time - we COULD NOT do this without you!!!

Stay Healthy!

Other Announcements

Class of 2020

Please know that you have not been forgotten as I cannot imagine the stress you are under. What is already a difficult time with determining your next steps after graduation, or just a period of general uncertainty, you now have this pandemic on your plate.

Please know that we will work with the high school administration and staff to do everything in our power to ensure that you have proper senior activities. While I cannot guarantee they will be held when originally planned, if we need to postpone, we will do everything possible to ensure that you have the opportunity to enjoy these events in-person with your friends.

Glove & Mask Donation

Earlier this week, all of the protective masks and latex gloves from the district were rounded up and distributed to our fire departments for use. Thank you to our Facilities & Grounds Director, Oscar Hills and Lead Nurse, Cathryn

Hampson for organizing this during difficult circumstances with a district-wide building closure.

Food Distribution

Beginning next week, food pick-up will only occur on ***Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday*** to limit interaction of employees. This will allow for families to pick-up multiple days of food at a time. The pick-up time will still be 9 am to 11 am.

It is imperative that families order by 9 am the day before the intended pick-up.

Families who do not order following the above guidelines will be asked to wait until the end of pick-up to ensure that all those who ordered in advance have picked up their orders.

Food distribution will not exceed 10 people at a time in close proximity to each other and all workers and others will maintain the recommended social distance of 6 feet.

Please keep in mind that food will not be offered during April vacation.

MCAS

Where the MCAS is in the Massachusetts General Laws, the Statehouse is now determining whether or not to give Commissioner Riley the ability to postpone or cancel the MCAS. That decision should be coming next week.