Dear Parents, Guardians, and Staff,

The situation around the COVID-19 pandemic changes almost hourly and we’re doing the best we can to accommodate those changes in our operations and future planning. The Commissioners of the DESE and DPH did host a phone call this morning in which they reviewed and updated information for schools in Massachusetts. The bottom line was that we need to continue monitoring the situation, but that they were not recommending the closure of all schools at this time.

You may have also heard that the MIAA has postponed the beginning of the Spring Athletic Season for two weeks and that there are multiple schools and districts closing throughout the state.

In consultation with town officials and finding out that we have a parent who may be positive for Coronavirus, we have decided to cancel the schools for students beginning today, Friday, March 13. This closure is initially for two weeks and, based upon local input and state guidance will be reviewed before the end of that time period. It is important that we as a district continue to provide educational support and vital services particularly for families that depend on the school for more than just academic instruction.

Students from 3rd through 12th grade will be sent home with their Chromebooks (we will be temporarily waiving the insurance requirement). Staff will be asked to come to school on Monday for additional training on remote instruction and to plan for how they will work with students over the next two weeks. Students should expect their first assignments to be ready by Thursday, March 18th (these may be electronic or hard copy depending on the staff member and our ability to respond to all students). As a district, we will be monitoring the completion of these assignments, they will count towards the students’ grades/promotion/graduation, and, while we know remote instruction isn’t as rigorous or beneficial as actual classroom instruction, we do not want to miss the opportunity to continue our students’ education.

We will also be providing directions early next week for how the district will continue to provide meals to our students who are qualified to receive free or reduced meals.

Special education staff will be in contact with the families of our students who have specialized educational needs to develop plans to assist those students. This may include specific days of the week when the district may transport those students to school to work directly with specialized staff.

As more information is developed, we will share this with families. We will continue to make proactive decisions based on what is best for our students and communities, and we are grateful for your cooperation and attention during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

David B. Hopson

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