

Coronavirus COVID-19 Update, 03-16-2020

To All Watertown-Mayer Staff & Families

Work continues on the part of our district leadership team to prepare our district's coronavirus response and distance learning plans. Work with all district staff will begin tomorrow, Tuesday, March 17, and will continue throughout the week.

The following are reminders from the communication sent Sunday, March 15:

- All schools are closed for students, including all before school, after school, and evening activities beginning Monday, March 16, extending through a minimum of Friday, March 27.
- All district staff (teachers, paraprofessional and all support) will report to work Tuesday, March 17 through Friday, March 20.
- All Community Education, school age childcare, early childhood family education, and preschool classes are canceled until further notice.
- Beginning Monday, March 16, Kids Company School Age Childcare will be offered for healthcare and emergency workers as per Governor Walz's order. Healthcare and emergency workers include, but may not be limited to, area hospital and clinic healthcare staff, firefighters and first responders/EMTs. Proof of employment credentials for emergency workers may be required to access the Kids Company service.
- Kids Company will also be offered for school district staff when required to report to work.
- All staff and students will be on spring break the week of March 23 as per the existing school district calendar.

Updates and new information as of Monday, March 16 at 3:00pm are as follows:

- School buildings will be open from 8:00 am - 3:00 pm for students and families to pick up educational and personal materials on the following schedule:
 - **Wednesday (3/18), students with the last names beginning with A-I**
 - **Thursday (3/19), students with the last names beginning with J-R**
 - **Friday (3/20), students with the last names beginning with S-Z**
 - Preschool, kids company, elementary, middle and high school students should remove all of the contents from their lockers, including phy-ed/athletic lockers, to assist custodians for cleaning purposes.
- Distance Learning Update - District staff will be working throughout the remainder of this week to prepare for distance learning instruction with students. Distance learning will begin on March 30. For now please observe the following:
 - Students in grades 3-4 who do not have a device at home, can checkout a Chromebook from the media center during the time scheduled for locker cleanout. Families checking out a district-owned device will be responsible for any incurred costs as a result of damage or negligence.
 - Students in grade 5-12 that need a device will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Please look for future communication on this process.

Charter/Spectrum will be offering free internet service for 60 days for families that currently do not have internet access and have a school-age child in their household.

- As a district, we are working to support the online learning needs of each student Pre-K through 12. **As such, we need each family in the district to fill out [this survey](#) by Friday, March 20.** Thank you for your timely response.
- As per Governor Walz's order on Sunday, we will be using the rest of this week to prepare for distance learning if needed on March 30th. In the meantime, students are not expected to be completing school work. More information will be forthcoming as our distance learning plans evolve.
- The district has begun construction of a page on the [district website](#), to provide for the ongoing sharing of information to support Pre-K through 12 students and families, with links to all information to support students and families throughout the weeks ahead.
- The school district and school offices will be open throughout the week of March 16. Please do not hesitate to call with any questions you may have.

As previously stated, this continues to be a rapidly changing situation. While it may seem as though there are more questions than answers, please know that our district leadership team and staff continue to work closely with the appropriate state, county and local officials and agencies to answer those questions in order to plan for the weeks ahead. It is our goal to keep families and district staff informed as events continue to evolve. Please watch closely for additional updates through the district's regular channels of communication as we continue to communicate information on what could be an extended period of time of distance learning and school closure beginning on March 30.

We are truly living through a time without precedent in recent history. The understanding and support of our staff, students, families and our communities is greatly appreciated. I believe it is important for us all to do our part as best we can to support each other throughout this challenging time, not the least of which will be to practice the recommended social distancing guidelines from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control. We need to do everything possible to assist these agencies for the greater good to "flatten the curve" of the spread of coronavirus in order to return to normal routines as soon as possible.

Sincerely

Ron Wilke
Superintendent of Schools