Sanford School Department Moving to Distance Learning Monday, March 16th

Sunday, March 15, 2020

Dear Sanford School Families,

I am writing to inform you that the Sanford School Department will be closed starting Monday, March 16 until Friday, March 27, with decisions on potential longer closures to be made at that time. This applies to all Sanford School Department facilities including Sanford Community Adult Education (SCAE) and Sanford Regional Technical Center (SRTC). Additionally, all outside facility use will be suspended during this time. The School Department’s Central Office along with each school’s administrative offices will operate with essential staff but closed to the public.

This has been a rapidly evolving situation. This closure has been made with careful consideration in response to the call by medical professionals to implement practices of social distancing to minimize the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). This closure is not the result of any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our immediate community, though we know the virus is present in southern Maine. We are taking this proactive approach out of an abundance of caution and in an effort to “flatten the curve” of COVID-19 cases in Maine. We are aware that closing school will be a hardship for families. Additional Information will be forthcoming but I wanted to communicate this news so families may begin planning for child-care and other concerns.

Even though our school buildings are closed, learning will continue. Our teachers have been working to develop meaningful learning opportunities for our students. Here are a few highlights of the academic plans:

- For grades K-4, teachers have developed home packets by grade level for continued learning. To be proactive, these learning packets were sent home with students this past Friday. If your child did not receive a learning packet, please contact your child’s school during normal business hours to make arrangements.
- For grades 5-12, we are using Google Classroom to provide classwork. Students have had a good deal of practice using technology for learning and independently accessing online resources. As part of our emergency procedures, each student in grades 5-12 brought home their assigned device this past Friday. Important information regarding students and technology can be found here, on our website.

Mission Statement: To create educational opportunities in which students are productive, caring, informed and involved citizens, and lifelong learners.
We know distance learning will not fully replace the classroom settings that students experience each day. We also know this will be “messy” at times – especially in the first few days – but we are determined to continue to provide learning opportunities for all students, and we ask for your patience and flexibility as we work through this process.

Sanford School Department will offer free meals during this school closure for all students; there are no eligibility or registration requirements. Lunch and breakfast for the following day will be available Monday through Friday at Lafayette School (main office) and a drive through pick up program will operate at the Memorial Gym. Meals will be available at both locations between 11:30 am and 12:30 pm. Children MUST be present to receive these meals and meals can NOT be consumed at school. For more information, please contact the School Nutrition Office at 608 8762.

The Sanford Backpack Program will have their regular weekly food bags packed and ready for pick-up along with free produce and many extras on Thursday and Friday afternoons from 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm at the front of Lafayette School and the Willard School circle. For more information or alternate arrangements, please e-mail lori@strongersanford.org.

It is possible that this closure will extend beyond the current projected timeline. It is important that all families practice and enforce strict social distancing and good personal hygiene during this time if we want to protect our community from the spread of COVID-19.

The Sanford School Department will continue to stay in touch with you throughout these distance-learning days. We understand this is a time of great uncertainty, and are here to support you and your children while doing our best to insure healthy practices for all in the community.

Thank you for your continued support of our students and our schools.

Sincerely,

Matt Nelson
Superintendent of Schools