

Dear LPSB employees,

Our hope for you and your families especially at this time of the year is that each of you are well and taking measures to ensure your continued well-being. Our employees continue to be vital to our students and district during this time of school closure. We want to update you on several things, but please understand there are still some unknowns concerning returning to the classroom this year.

Expectations

During COVID-19 school closures, employee expectations are still present. This means that teachers and paras must be providing instruction weekly or at the least providing office hours for parents and students to contact you regarding questions about continued learning. This may not look the same at all schools, but your principal should be informed of your plan and progress.

1. Student work may be in the form of digital lessons, videos, paper copies, or online assignments.
2. Student work is not graded, unless unusual circumstances are evident.
 - a. Advanced placement and dual enrollment courses require grades.
 - b. You may consider grading work if it will impact a student's promotion.
 - c. You may consider grading work if it is a part of credit recovery.
 - d. Students are not REQUIRED to complete work, but they should be encouraged.
 - e. Student work is not REQUIRED to be submitted to the teacher.
3. Special education and 504 services are still required. Guidance has been provided by the special education department to your principals and documentation of services is required for these students. Questions may be directed to the special education department as needed.
4. Teachers (and paras) are required to contact parents regularly to address any concerns of families. LDOE has given several research-based facts about students needing to see and hear teachers to ensure normalcy for their mental health. Weekly contact has been recommended.
5. Department supervisors may be contacting their employees about specific assignments in which the district may need assistance.
6. Employees should make every effort to contact students and continue to encourage and engage them in the learning process.

Financial

As you are aware, our district relies heavily on sales tax revenue. We, like other districts, are expecting tremendous reductions in our monthly revenues for March, April, and May. Please know that each of you will receive your regular salary; however, there could be a reduction in the May sales tax disbursement. A recommendation will be made to either allow the May sales tax to remain the same or to have a reduction based on collections. We know you are understanding of this sensitive matter, and we will do everything we can to limit the reduction if that is the recommendation.

Future

It is our opinion that returning to the classroom in May is doubtful, and currently Governor Edwards has been asked by the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents and BESE to extend school closure through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Although we have received nothing official, we are anticipating that request to occur. At this time, I see a few things that could happen. We have not been given any guidance in these areas, so we will wait for LDOE recommendations. The options could look something like below, but, of course, no decisions have yet been made:

1. We do not anticipate being able to return to the classroom in May.
2. We may be forced to continue distance learning with the “stay at home” order, and at that point we will determine the deadline or cutoff date for delivering instruction to students.
3. We may be forced to extend our distance learning by a few weeks since we were late starting the process.
4. We could be faced with beginning school early in the fall, such as (2-3) weeks for all students or maybe just struggling students to focus on Math and ELA for a few weeks.

Certainties

1. We know that students are better off by having each of you on his or her team.
2. We know we will rebound from this stronger than when it began.
3. We know that we will need to develop clear plans for future school closures.

4. We know we have the “best” employees in Lincoln Parish who will find a way to always put students FIRST!

In closing, THANK YOU, instructional staff, for your continued efforts to reach students and provide instruction to each one. To the support staff, THANK YOU for helping with special assignments when contacted.

We look forward to hearing the successes you are having with your students and parents. Together we will be stronger!

Sincerely,

Mike Milstead
Superintendent

Lisa Bastion
Asst. Superintendent