

MADISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mark Schwarz, *Superintendent*



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March 12, 2020

RE: Public Health Actions related to COVID-19

Madison Families,

I am writing to you today to connect during a uniquely challenging moment in human history. At the time of this correspondence, there are no confirmed COVID-19 cases within our local community, however the global patterns of transmission appear to indicate that the virus will eventually spread throughout our neighborhoods and families. While most healthy people will experience the disease with mild symptoms, some of our most vulnerable loved ones are at serious risk and some **will** need prompt and intensive medical attention. Accordingly, the Madison Public Schools considers it a moral imperative to take compassionate action with regard to the safety of these individuals. The following actions are designed to slow the spread of this virus so that our healthcare system does not become overwhelmed.

Cancellation of Non-essential Activities

In coordination with our Health Department and Borough Officials, the Madison Public School district will be suspending all activities that are not directly related to the essential educational functions of our schools, **effective Friday, March 13**. This includes the following provisions:

1. All extracurricular activities occurring after school hours, including MHS Athletics and the MJSAO Program (including practices), are hereby suspended until further notice.
2. All public events held in our schools (concerts, art shows, etc) are hereby suspended until further notice.
3. All field trips and competitions are suspended until further notice.
4. Parent volunteering in the schools will be suspended until further notice.
5. Our facilities will be closed to all outside groups until further notice, with the following considerations:
 - a. The Community House-operated Before and After Care program may operate on Friday, but service will no longer be available onsite effective Monday, March 16.
 - b. The Recreation Department deserves our appreciation for understanding that we must suspend their events in our schools. Borough officials will be in communication with recreation participants shortly.
 - c. The Adult School must also make alternative arrangements for programming as they will not have access to our facilities.

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While the news of these cancellations is no doubt disappointing, we believe that this is a rare opportunity for us to sacrifice some things that we hold dear so that others may continue to enjoy the simple gift of life.

Preparedness for Extended School Closure

As this week progresses, please be aware that a complete school closure may also be imminent. I am speaking daily with officials from the Department of Education, the Department of Health and local superintendents regarding such a prospect and the district has developed a comprehensive plan for continuing instruction remotely that will be communicated to families by Tuesday, March 17. In the event of such a closure, the school district will use three non-instructional calendar days to transition to an online learning environment. For these three days, there will be no instruction for students, however each school will communicate directly with families to ensure that all students and families are prepared with technology and accommodations, as necessary, to receive instruction at home. Remote instruction will begin on Day 4 of an extended closure.

As an additional cautionary measure, **students should expect to bring home all of their instructional materials, devices and chargers after school tomorrow, Friday, March 13.** It is also prudent at this time for all families to develop child-care plans as necessary in the event of extended school closure. We will maintain thorough communication with families throughout this period.

I am proud to serve this Dodger family and I will always place the public health as my first priority. We will get through this together.

Sincerely,

Mark Schwarz
Superintendent of Schools

Cc: Board of Education
Madison Public School Staff
Bob Conley, Mayor
Ray Codey, Borough Administrator
Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Executive County Superintendent
F. Michael Fitzpatrick, Health Officer