

# **Madison Board of Education**

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Mr. John Thomas, Acting Superintendent      1379 Grace Street • Mansfield, Ohio 44905  
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To: Madison Local School District Students, Parents, Residents, Board, Support Staff, Teachers, Administrators and Supervisors

From: John Thomas, Acting Superintendent

Re: Coronavirus – School Operations Update

Date: May 4, 2020

A lot has happened in the five weeks since I last wrote to all of you to provide you with a summary of what the staff was doing; safety, and meal delivery and pickup. During the past five weeks we have planned, implemented, and abandoned four plans and we are now working with a fifth plan that we hope will get us through the end of this school year on May 20<sup>th</sup>. These constantly changing plans have been necessary as we have been given changing rules and guidelines to use to operate your schools. In this letter I will describe what has happened, what is happening, and what we are planning for in the months ahead.

## **Teaching Continues**

Teachers and students are still working together on a daily basis. One of the exciting things that we first noticed was that students were often contacting their teachers with questions during the evening. This new distance/online learning environment comes with new opportunities but also with some things we had not anticipated. The new opportunity that is exciting for many is that teaching and learning are not restricted to seven hours a day. The important thing we are learning is that there are no rules or guidelines for when students and teachers should turn this “off.” While this was exciting to many at first, we are now experiencing stress being reported by both teachers and students (and parents) in this environment where they seem to always be operating in the “on” position. We are now aware of this and are developing rules and guidelines for how this will work in the future. The last day for students this school year is still May 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **Distance Learning**

Many of our teachers were already working with students in an online learning environment prior to the coronavirus. But we were not prepared for the sudden switch from face-to-face instruction to online instruction as the sole delivery method. The district needs more Chromebooks in order to support this online learning approach. We have loaned Chromebooks to hundreds of students but realize that we need to have a one-to-one ratio of Chromebooks to students in order to be able to provide the support to students that is required in this approach to instructional delivery.

## **Graduation**

Our Graduation Plan is available on our website's home page for anyone to read. Graduation this year will be unlike any ceremony that we could imagine or would have even tried to imagine just a few months ago. The orders and guidelines from Governor DeWine and Dr. Amy Acton have saved lives and protected our loved ones. We are grateful for their leadership and steadfastness during this pandemic. We are also grateful for the understanding and the support from this community to help plan activities to celebrate graduation for the Class of 2020 within the rules and guidelines that have been given to us.

## **Custodians**

The custodial staff is returning to work today and is beginning the deep cleaning of all school facilities that normally would not start until school is out. While many sections of our facilities continue to be used daily, we have emptied student desks and lockers and bagged their belongings for pickup when they return school items that they are still using (like Chromebooks, textbooks, and library books). The custodians are also sanitizing areas of the building that remain in use on a daily basis and sometimes this is required multiple times a day. Custodians are now also available to help deep clean, paint and prep floors in the Lincoln Heights building that will be the new home for the child care, preschool and day care programs that have been housed at the Jesse Beer building.

## **Lincoln Heights**

The Lincoln Heights facility on Grace Street that has served the Headstart Program for over twenty years, has been purchased by the Madison Board of Education in March. All programs, services and staff housed at the Jesse Beer facility will be moving to the Lincoln Heights building when day cares and preschools are permitted to reopen. The Lincoln Heights facility is newer than the Jesse Beer facility and Headstart invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in improvements from federal funding while they had the facility. These improvements include

things like a rubber roof, LED lights, and state-of-the-art playgrounds. Once the Madison Early Childhood Learning Center has moved to Lincoln Heights, the Jesse Beer building will be put up for sale.

## **Adult Education**

The Adult Education students were permitted to continue to attend classes in the CTC even after school age students were sent home. Once the Stay Home order was issued, Adult Education students began receiving instruction online. These classes are designed to be conducted in labs with access to large technical equipment. On April 21<sup>st</sup>, the Adult Education Director was authorized to allow students to complete their coursework by returning to the CTC labs to take their end of course certification tests. At this time, we are working to complete this phase for each course. The next step will be to publicize new course offerings and then to get things ready to start when we are given permission to fully reopen.

## **Offices**

Starting May 4, 2020, all offices in the district will start to reopen with some staff actually in the office a few days each week. Each school office and each department office will be gradually bringing back staff to complete end of year tasks and to start planning for next year. All offices have been used to some extent while instruction has been taking place online, and the offices at the middle school and at South Elementary have been open to serve as meal pickup sites during this Covid19 event. What is changing is that there will now be office staff in school offices and department offices on a scheduled basis several days each week. Check our website for a schedule of dates and times for each office.

## **Kindergarten Registration/Open Enrollment**

Kindergarten Registration and Open Enrollment are both being conducted this year using online forms that can be found and accessed from the Home Page of our district website. All the principals have access to the forms if you fill them out online. If you are unable to upload forms for Kindergarten Registration, make copies of required documents and mail to the building principal. If you are unable to upload forms for Open Enrollment, make copies of required documents and mail to the Board of Education office, 1379 Grace St., Mansfield, OH 44905.

## **Summer School/Summer Programs**

We have not made any decisions at this time regarding what we are able to do and need to wait to see what rules and guidelines we will be given to work within before we make any decisions. Watch for announcements regarding this in future updates.

## **Return of School Property**

Principals are currently planning how they will be collecting school property from students. Everyone should expect that this will be completed following the last day of school for this year (May 20<sup>th</sup>). Items like Chromebooks, textbooks, library books, etc. will be collected and students and parents can pick up student possessions and things like yearbooks all in one trip. We will be following the Stay Safe Ohio protocols in force at the time of collection.

## **Recovery Planning**

Finally, all of us, your children, you, the teachers, the principals, the cooks, the bus drivers, the custodians, the aides, the counselors, the principals, the secretaries, the technology staff, the supervisors, members of the community, central office staff, and the Board members, have been affected by this pandemic. We all need to recover. We don't know what we will be told we can and cannot do in the next few months but we want you to know the steps that we are taking now to plan for the month ahead.

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, the Leadership Team met to begin the Recovery Planning process. We identified 17 committees that we have now formed to identify, analyze and report out on everything we have done, have learned and everything we need to do differently and better in the next school year. These committees will be comprised of support staff, educators and administrators who will be working together to create three scenarios for how we will deliver instruction and operate the school district next fall. These scenarios include: returning to face-to-face instruction; a blended instructional environment with some students in school and some students working from home each school day; and continuing to deliver instruction online. Each of these options will come with different challenges and will place different demands on all of us.

In order to be comprehensive in our work, we will need your help. One of the committees is named the After Action Review. This committee will be taking a look at what worked; what was missed, what needs done differently; and what support your student(s) and you need from us. In order to gather that information the committee will be requesting feedback from all stakeholders. You should watch for opportunities to provide feedback through surveys, focus group meetings, phone interviews and other methods for gathering information. This information gathering process will not start until we have completed this school year in order to keep our primary focus right now on teaching.

We are in this together and look forward to working together to strengthen this district.