

Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools

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Our schools are caring, creative, and equitable communities that empower all children to build on their talents and passions to grow into engaged citizens and life-long learners.

March 14, 2020

Dear MRPS Families,

Governor Scott has issued an “[Orderly Closure of Vermont PreK-12 Schools](#).” District administration and teachers are currently working at breakneck speed to determine the details of our plan moving forward. Please know that as we figure those out the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff are at the top of our priority list.

We are taking this one week at a time and this letter will serve as our generalized plan for the coming week.

1. **All schools will be running on a two hour delay schedule on both Monday (3/16) and Tuesday (3/17).** Busses will pick students up two hours after typical pick up time. I will be making my early morning phone call on both mornings to ensure this message is heard across our community.
 - a. Student attendance for Monday and Tuesday is a family decision. *Please do what is right for your family.*
 - b. Part 2 and Bridges will run, as scheduled, Monday and Tuesday.
2. **All schools will be closed for students beginning Wednesday (3/18) through April 6th.**
3. Our goal is to get food service up and running by Thursday (3/19) of this week. More details will follow as we organize this process.
 - a. Please spread the word that any family who needs food assistance will get it. We don't know exactly what that means right now, but it is a promise that we intend to keep.
4. Parent conferences are postponed until further notice. Teachers will be in touch soon with more information on how conferences can be held virtually. Please give teachers time right now to determine how we are going to maintain learning. We will circle back to conferences.
5. Our learning plan is in development. Teachers have been, and will continue to be, working on this during our two hour delays, staff meeting, and after students have been dismissed from school Tuesday. They will be in communication with families as soon as they possibly can. Please give them the time to do the necessary collaborative planning that a change like this warrants.

We will be in consistent communication with you as this week unfolds. Recognize that principals, teachers, and District administration have been working around the clock last week and over the weekend to do our very best with this intense situation. Our email inboxes are quite full and we will

continue to do our best to answer each and every email in a timely-ish manner. Right now, we need our teachers and principals focusing in on our students and their well-being over the next few weeks. The communities of Montpelier and Roxbury have been nothing but supportive. This support quite literally drives our team forward. Thank you.

Forgive this longer letter, but I need to address our awesome students.

Dear Students of UES, RVS, MSMS, and MHS,

I'm sorry. Last week I saw some of you crying, many of you worried, and a lot of disappointment and it breaks my heart. This is not what we promised you and every one of us at MRPS knows that.

To our elementary students--I'm sorry that you will miss recess with your friends, puppet shows, and laughing at the next silly thing your teacher is bound to do.

To our middle school students--I'm sorry that you will not be with your friends, spring sports aren't starting, and dances were cancelled.

To our high school students--I'm sorry I had to cancel Grease, that pitchers and catchers are not reporting tomorrow, and that school looks nothing like it has been for as long as you can remember.

You may not be able to see it now, but somewhere in the distant future, as an adult, you will be sitting with a child who loves you and you will be telling them the story of when your whole world shut down because of some virus. You will tell them how scared you were or how psyched/sad you were when school was cancelled or how much you missed your friends.

I know I sound old saying this, but it is true. As someone who lived through the Challenger explosion, the horror of the Twin Towers, and the black out of NYC (google it--seriously surreal), you will tell your story of COVID-19. It will be a bonding experience when you meet new people who also experienced it but in a different city, state, or country.

Your teachers, your principals, and everyone else at MRPS loves you. When this is over we will do everything in our power to make it right. To get learning on track. To get you the experiences and learning you deserve.

Sincerely,

Libby Bonesteel
MRPS Superintendent of Schools

