



St. Charles Public Schools

District Office
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St. Charles, MN 55972
(507) 932-4910

March 27, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On March 25, 2020, Governor Walz issued Emergency [Executive Order 20-19](#) officially authorizing the Commissioner of Education to direct Minnesota Public Schools to implement a Distance Learning period. Our Distance Learning period begins March 30, 2020 and will remain in place until April 30, 2020. It is the intent to bring students back for regular instruction in our buildings starting May 5, 2020. May 1st and May 4th are intended for planning days to allow staff to prep and plan so we can be ready to transition back to providing regular instruction in our buildings.

Our staff has worked extremely hard the past week and a half of the shutdown period helping to ensure free meals were being provided to our students; free childcare was being provided to children of emergency responders, healthcare, and other essential workers; and developing our District's Distance Learning Plan.

Our Distance Learning Plan is ready to go. E-Learning is a component of our plan, but it is not the only method that will be available to reach our students. Our plan is built to ensure two key aspects: 1) we need to provide our students with equitable access to instruction and the supporting materials they need to receive the instruction we are providing; and 2) we need to ensure that our students have the ability, and opportunity to regularly interact with our teachers.

Our School District has spent the past two and a half years making a significant investment in technology resources with the anticipation that we would be eventually providing all of our students with a District provided e-learning device, our hope was to move slow to be able to move faster in the future. Life happens when you are making other plans, and the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed our District and other districts throughout Minnesota, our country, and the world to develop and prepare to implement distance learning.

We are committed to providing the best possible education to your children. We want you to know, and want to assure you that our staff is here for your children and we are here for you too! Our plan is structured so that we can continue to provide our teachers an opportunity to interact, engage, and deliver instruction to your children meeting them through the means that works best for them and your family.

We realize moving to Distance Learning changes the conversations that you will be having in your households, and some parents may feel that an extra burden is being placed on their shoulders. The intent of our plan is not to place an extra burden on our students' parents. We are here for your kids and we are here for you! Our Distance Learning plan includes links to staff contact information. If your children and/or you have questions and suggestions for us as we move forward together, do not hesitate to reach out.

Our District will begin implementing our plan on Monday, March 30, 2020. Distance Learning Classroom Instruction will officially begin on Friday, April 3, 2020. The period of March 30-April 2 will be used to help

ensure students are equipped with the resources they will need to participate in Distance Learning, to provide an opportunity for families to acclimate themselves to the District's plan, and to provide classroom teachers and support staff an opportunity to connect and check in with students and their families.

We will be providing scheduled opportunities for students and a parent/guardian to visit the schools next week to pick up the resources they will need to begin instruction. We understand that Governor Walz has issued a "Stay at Home Order." The Minnesota Department of Education has clarified that providing your children with an education is deemed an essential function, and providing your children and you, access to our buildings to pick up the resources you will need is a supported activity of the Governor's Order.

The schedule for picking up resources next week is in our [Distance Learning Plan](#) document. Our resource pickup plan is structured to allow our staff, your children, and you to uphold [social distancing guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and the Minnesota Department of Health](#) when you visit our schools.

Free meals for students along with free school age care for emergency responders, healthcare, and other essential workers will continue during our distance learning period. Information about these services can be found in our [Distance Learning Plan](#) document and on our District's website at: <https://www.scschools.net/COVID-19districtupdates>.

We feel good about the [Distance Learning Plan](#) we created to serve your children. We know that it is not perfect. Throughout this process, we want to hear from your children and from you on what is working well, what is not, and what you feel we could be doing to better meet the needs of our families. We are committed to providing a high quality education to your children. You can count on our staff to put forth our best effort to continue to meet the needs of your kids!

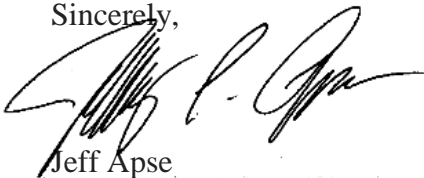
The current draft of our [Distance Learning Plan](#) is posted to our website at <https://www.scschools.net/>. You can find it by clicking on "Distance Learning Site" on the menu bar at the top of your screen, or clicking on the circle button titled "Distance Learning Site."

As we move forward, we realize and understand that to meet the needs of our students we have to be willing to adapt and adjust our plan based on the feedback we receive from them and from you. Throughout this Distance Learning period, please share your input. We will make a point to regularly update you on any changes made to processes and procedures relating to our plan.

This is a stressful time for all of us. If you are struggling or needing help with anything, know that you are not alone in this world, and that St. Charles Public Schools is here for your children, and for you. Please reach out to our staff if you need help navigating through life's challenges. We are all in this together!

Thanks for your patience, understanding, and continued support.

Sincerely,



Jeff Apse
Superintendent of Schools
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