Dear Hopkins Families:

This afternoon, Governor Walz announced an executive order to keep all K-12 public schools closed for the duration of the academic school year. This measure is being taken to limit the spread of COVID-19. What this means for Hopkins Public Schools is that we will remain physically closed and will continue Distance Learning for the duration of the school year. Per the governor’s order, Hopkins Schools will use May 1 and May 4, 2020 to engage in professional learning and strengthen our plans for the extended Distance Learning period. These will be non-school days for students. Our last scheduled day of school will remain June 5, 2020.

While many of us were anticipating this announcement, we all were hoping for a different outcome, no matter how unlikely it seemed. On behalf of Hopkins Public Schools, I want you to know, we are so sorry. We miss our students greatly and are upset to hear this news. We know our families were looking forward to many celebratory events that close out each year. We were, too. There are many events that are cherished traditions to help recognize milestones and important transitions. We are currently auditing all of the events that were scheduled for this spring and are exploring ways to celebrate differently. Stay tuned for details from your respective school.

I also want to acknowledge the Class of 2020 and their families. For you, this news comes with an extra level of disappointment and loss. Our seniors are missing out on their last moments of high school and the chance to say goodbye to friends, teachers and other important school staff. This pandemic is forcing a transition into adulthood that is very different from the experiences had by previous graduating classes. Our seniors have been confronted with a challenging opportunity to create new kinds of memories during their last three months of school. And, there is a lesson for our seniors and for all of us, as the Governor indicated this afternoon, in learning how to grapple as a collective with the hard problems that face us as a global society.

Graduation is undoubtedly on your mind. I assure you, we are urgently thinking about it as well. We thank high school parents and students for your feedback on the graduation survey. Our charge is to quickly review your input and identify viable ways we can celebrate the accomplishments of our seniors while adhering to physical-distancing guidelines. We will be in touch with you soon. Please know we welcome student and parent partnership. I know our students are resilient, brilliant and creative. We have no doubt that members of the Class of 2020 will create a path forward for themselves and will rise as stronger, more capable people.
Seniors, we can’t change these circumstances, but we will do everything we can to honor you as a class.

Even though we are in uncharted territory, Hopkins has been preparing for the possibility of an extended closure for many weeks. We did not want this, but we are ready for it. As we continue on this journey for the rest of the year, you - parents and caregivers - are our educational partners. We appreciate your critical feedback, which has allowed us to create flexible and meaningful learning experiences as well as attendance policies that honor the complexity of the Distance Learning experience. To that end, we will share information next week about how we will approach assessment and grading for the remainder of the school year.

You may also be wondering what our summer learning and enrichment options will look like. We are absolutely engaged in summer planning right now, but don’t yet have specific information to share. We remain hopeful about offering summer enrichment and summer school options that adhere to physical-distancing guidelines should these continue to be required. We will share more information as soon as our plans are more solidified.

As some parents return to work, we anticipate that helping children with Distance Learning will become more difficult for some families. Our principals, teachers, and all staff members are here to help in expected and creative ways. If you are in need of resources or support, please reach out. Please communicate with your child’s teacher and/or principal, and also visit the Loop for a list of virtual, community and school resources.

Hopkins is a strong and resilient community. We think of those who are ill, in isolation, or in need of support. Let’s stay connected. #HopkinsStrong

Be Well,

Dr. Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed,
Superintendent