March 16, 2020

Dear Hopkins Families:

It’s officially day one of social distancing for Hopkins. And it feels strange. A school without students feels distinctly empty. This is not where we thought we would be even a week ago -- and yet, we’re here. Even though we have increased the physical space between us and our students, we will work hard to fill that space with strong and frequent communication.

A parent sent me an article about social distancing that I found helpful. You can find the link here. It’s important to remember that everyone’s health is of utmost importance and that’s why we’re following the guidelines as sent forth by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) ... and that there will be an end date.

Today, our Hopkins staff met and ferociously worked to create sustainable plans. Their commitment to provide our Hopkins students and families with resources, support and continued access to high-quality education was obvious.

As we navigate our new reality, we want to keep you updated with the many details that are unfolding. To that end, here is the latest information we want you to know:

- Although school for students is closed tomorrow, Tuesday, March 17, you may want to pick up materials or belongings for your student. Your building principal will be in touch with you about how to pick up or access resources that will support your child’s learning. In addition, you will be given instructions for how to access items your child may have left at school.

- The governor has ordered school to be closed through March 27 to allow teachers to prepare Distance Learning plans for a longer closure. Due to our spring break, the earliest students would return to Hopkins is April 6; however, we want to make you aware that school could be closed for longer than that.

- Hopkins will begin formal Distance Learning on April 6 (in the event school remains closed at that point). Until that time, Hopkins elementary teachers will provide enrichment activities designed to keep children engaged in learning. We will share those enrichment learning folders with you on Wednesday, March 18. Secondary teachers will be in contact with their students. Early Childhood families will be contacted by their teacher to receive enrichment and at-home learning activities.

- Childcare for children ages 4-12 will be available to parents who are emergency first responders or work in the medical field. This option will be available starting Wednesday, March 18 and extend through March 27. If you are working in these fields and in need of childcare, please fill out this survey. We hope to extend child care options to more
families should school need to be closed longer. Stay tuned for details.

- The nutrition staff will offer meals tomorrow, March 17, at Eisenhower Elementary (1001 Highway 7) in the parking lot with their Fuel for Active Kids truck. Each bag will contain a lunch and next-day breakfast. No pre-ordering is necessary. Our long-term meal plan will begin Wednesday, March 18 and will continue until school resumes. We will share details in our next email.

- We are so grateful to the many parents and community members who have reached out to us wanting to help out in any way possible. We have established a Community Support/Outreach Task Force that will begin to organize requests from families and share them with parents who want to help. You can contact Dominique Pierre-Toussiant or Holly Magdanz if you would like to help or need resources.

- If you have any questions about your child’s health, please contact your medical provider. If your questions are specific to COVID-19, please contact the Minnesota Department of Health (MDE). Their hotline numbers are: 651-297-1304 or 800-657-3504. The hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

- We realize we have shared a lot of communication with you. If you want to reference any of the resources or messages we have shared, please refer to our COVID-19 website.

Thank you for your partnership and engagement as we navigate these unprecedented times. Hopkins Public Schools is a collection of strong communities. We are grateful for your high level care and willingness to serve.

Be well,

Dr. Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed, Superintendent