Dear Hopkins Families:

I hope this finds you in good health. We have completed week one of Distance Learning at Hopkins. Our entire staff has worked incredibly hard to make this experience the best it can be for families and students — we are all here for you. Principals are sending surveys to gather feedback from all parents and caregivers as well as secondary students. We will use your feedback to inform a discussion with our School Board next Tuesday, April 21. Thank you for letting us know how Distance Learning is going for your family.

I also want to make you aware of a situation that could have a deep impact on some of our programs and departments. According to the Governor’s Executive Order, school districts' general funds will continue to receive their expected revenue based on average daily K-12 student attendance during Distance Learning. However, programs and departments that rely solely on fees are experiencing a sharp decline to their revenue. In Hopkins, this is most deeply affecting our Community Education, Nutrition, and Early Childhood departments.

Over the last two weeks, we have fiercely advocated for legislative relief to provide funding to pay our fee-based staff; however, these efforts have so far not proven successful. We are preparing for an unfortunate reality. Our Nutrition department is expected to lose up to $500,000 and Community Education may lose approximately $2.5 million. With no financial relief in sight, we are quickly facing forced layoffs in these departments. Yet, during this time of widespread illness and uncertainty, these same staff members have also played a critical role as our frontline workers. These Hopkins staff have reported to work to ensure our most vulnerable families receive meals and the children of emergency workers receive care. They are our essential workers, and have stepped up and stepped in for our Hopkins community and staff.

Many of you have reached out with a desire to help those affected by COVID-19. We have identified several ways our community can make a difference with this specific situation.

- **Reach out to your local legislators.** To help us advocate at the legislative level, please review and personalize a draft letter to our local legislators that can be found at [this link](#). Attached to this email you will also find contact information for all the legislators that represent Hopkins Public Schools.
- **Order free meals offered through our nutrition program:** The nutrition department is provided reimbursement for each meal served, so the more the service is utilized, the more you are helping to support and provide funds for the department during a time of dire financial need. All children are eligible to receive
free meals -- you do not need to qualify to take part in the program. More information about how to order meals is available here.

• **If you are financially comfortable doing so, consider the following:**
  1. Log into your nutrition account and pay off an outstanding balance.
  2. Consider paying whatever you would have paid if your child was still enrolled in Kids & Company, Stepping Stones, Kaleidoscope, Stay and Explore, ECFE, or after school art, sports, and/or other after school enrichment experiences.

We are working to identify meaningful ways our community and partners can help. I am thrilled to share that on April 10, 2020, the Hopkins Education Foundation (HEF) board of directors voted to grant $50,000 to Hopkins Public Schools in support of staff and student needs during this truly difficult time in our District’s history. HEF will also provide short-term administrative and web support for a crowdfunding campaign through the HEF website to accept funds made by the community in support of Hopkins Public Schools. We will share more information about this #HopkinsStrong campaign in a follow-up communication later this week. We are so grateful to HEF for their partnership and support!

We understand not everyone is able to financially contribute at this time. COVID-19 has placed additional stress and strain on many of us. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you are in need of resources or support. We are here for you.

Thank you, Hopkins families, for banding together to help fight the unfortunate consequences of this global pandemic. We’re stronger together, and together we can get through this. We are Hopkins Strong!

Be Well,

Dr. Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed,
Superintendent