



SUFFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Dr. John B. Gordon III, Superintendent

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March 13, 2020

Dear Suffolk Public Schools Family:

I know it is unusual for you to hear from me during this time of the day. We wanted to take the time to provide you with an update on our plan in dealing with COVID-19, commonly known as the coronavirus. Please be advised that Monday, March 16, 2020 will be a Teacher Workday and Student Holiday. Students will be expected to return to school on Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

The safety of our students and staff is and always will remain our top priority. On March 2, 2020, we released a letter to parents, staff, and students describing proactive prevention methods and strategies. These methods include providing additional solutions to the custodial staff that fights the flu and the coronavirus. We also included links to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as the Virginia Department of Health. This information, including FAQs, and our 2020 Pandemic Response Plan, can be found on our website, under departments and student health. It can also be found under Emergency Information.

Since that time, I have been in constant communication with Superintendents from Region II, the Western Tidewater Health Department, as well as the Virginia Department of Education to determine a potential plan for distance learning, extra-curricular activities, and student and staff travel, to name a few. The coronavirus is classified as a pandemic from the World Health Organization and yesterday, the Governor declared a state of emergency for the Commonwealth of Virginia. With this new information, Suffolk Public Schools activated our Pandemic Response Plan.

We have developed a plan of action to continue educating our students, with limitations. Effective today, March 13, 2020 we are putting the following measures in place:

- 1) All extra-curricular and after school activities are canceled until further notice. This does not include Parks and Recreations, Boys and Girls Club or the YMCA due to child care needs.
- 2) Building Rentals and Facility use are postponed through March 30, 2020. This includes facility usage for this weekend.
- 3) School volunteers and outside visitors are not allowed in schools through March 30, 2020.
- 4) Student drop-off and pick-up will be adjusted to include parents/guardians dropping off or picking up their students at the front door or designated locations ONLY.
- 5) All school related events including conferences, concerts, field trips, etc... are postponed through March 30, 2020.
- 6) We are reducing the number of additional large gatherings within the school day including assemblies.

Suffolk Public Schools will continue to monitor the coronavirus and its impact on the City of Suffolk. This is a fluid situation and we will make adjustments as necessary. As we continue to gather more information, including our communication and collaboration with the City of Suffolk, we will keep you informed. Thank you for your support of Suffolk Public Schools.

Sincerely,



Dr. John B. Gordon III
Division Superintendent