

March 15, 2020

Dear Boston Public Schools Community,

On Friday night, Mayor Walsh announced that the Boston Public Schools (BPS) will be closed **Tuesday, March 17 until April 27, 2020**. Schools will be open tomorrow, **Monday, March 16** during regular school hours with the exception of the Eliot and McKinley school communities. All BPS buses have been cleaned and disinfected and will run on normal schedules tomorrow.

At this time, there is no known exposure of coronavirus in any school community outside of the Eliot K-8 School. The decision to close schools is being made proactively to prevent and contain the spread of the virus, and follows the national and state level declaration of states of emergency.

The closure of schools is a tremendous disruption to our families and their daily routines and we are here to support you. This decision was made as a precaution and in close consultation with the Mayor's Office, the Mayor's Office of Health and Human Services, the Boston Public Health Commission, and many City and State officials. During this temporary closure, BPS remains committed to serving our students and families, and will provide materials for students to continue their learning and access to healthy meals.

Learning at Home:

Monday will serve as a transition day for students to pick up their belongings and parents and guardians can pick up student medication. Printed learning materials will be available at all schools for students to use at home while schools are closed. In addition, educational resources will be set up with Google Classroom, an online location where students and families can find materials and work independently on activities at home. Your student's learning materials can be accessed at: www.bostonpublicschools.org/backpack using their BPS Google account.

If you cannot pick up your student's learning materials on Monday, we will have them available by grade level at meal sites throughout the City, noted below, beginning on Tuesday. We strongly encourage families to pick up their student's materials, either at school or online, to help prevent lost learning time that could occur during an extended time away from school and to keep students positively engaged.

- More information for students at the Eliot K8 and all three McKinley schools will be coming to them directly soon.
- Students with unique learning needs are important to us. In order to properly assess students' unique learning and service needs, schools will contact the parents/guardians of English learners and students in special education programs to be able to make individualized decisions based on student needs.
- We will work with students nearing graduation to ensure they have access to Advanced Placement (AP) and SAT materials, as well as other important college and career pathway exams.
- We also want to make sure our high school students remain on track for graduation. We will work with our Re-Engagement Center on proactive measures to ensure students at high risk of dropping out remain engaged during these next several weeks.

Internet and Computer Access:



In the coming days, we will be releasing details for BPS families to receive no-cost options for Internet and computers as needed.

- Many Internet service providers have already offered discounted or no-cost options and we are working with providers to ensure families have access to home Internet.
- Chromebooks will also be provided to students in need of a device and BPS has purchased an additional 20,000 Chromebooks to assist with families in need. Each Chromebook will provide access to the learning activities above, as well as new learning resources to assist students.
- The new chrome books will be prioritized based on need and to students in grade 3-12. We will use our already established equity measures to make these determinations.
- Distribution sites will be set up throughout the City for students to receive a Chromebook. We are also working with our partners to ensure that families can access support services for technical help with their Chromebook or Internet access.

Meal Locations:

BPS will continue to provide free breakfast and lunch meals to all Boston students. This includes our community based early childhood provider students, charters, Metco, and Catholic parochial schools. BPS will distribute the meals at several dozen locations throughout the City of Boston beginning on **Tuesday, March 17**. A variety of packaged meal options will be available for pick-up **Monday - Friday from 8:30 am - 11:30 am**. Visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/coronavirus for the full list. No child will be turned away.

Additionally, the City of Boston in partnership with Project Bread, YMCA of Greater Boston, Boston Centers for Youth and Families, and other community organizations will also be providing free meals to school-aged children at various locations and times across the city. [Click here](#) to view all the current meal locations and times. More locations will become available over the coming week.

For as long as our schools are closed, we will continue to assess how best to meet the needs of our students with a close eye on equity and may adjust our plans as needed based on our continued analysis. We will provide you with regular updates along the way to keep you informed about learning opportunities, access to healthy meals, and resources about the virus.

Every employee of the Boston Public Schools stands ready to support you during this uncertain time. We love our students and nothing is more important to us than their health and well-being. We look forward to the day we can welcome our students back to school.

Sincerely,



Dr. Brenda Cassellius
Superintendent