

Madison Board of Education

Mr. John Thomas, Acting Superintendent
Robin L. Klenk, Treasurer

1379 Grace Street • Mansfield, Ohio 44905
Phone (419) 589-2600

Dear Madison Parents and Community,

Just last Monday March 16, 2020, we sent home packets of lessons for two to three weeks with your children. As of Friday March 20, 2020, we have closed all daily operations within our schools with the exception of food services and the bus garage. Jesse Beer preschool and daycare has closed as of 6 pm Friday March 20th. Here is what we know and what we are doing as of today:

Communication

As the Acting Superintendent, I will continue to communicate with you and the community through this website letter. It will be updated as needed to provide you with the most up to date information that we have regarding the operations of our schools. Teachers will be contacting their students to provide lessons. This has already been taking place. Teachers will also be calling parents or guardians to check with you to see how you are handling this unexpected shift from school to home, to determine if there is anything we can do to help you or your children. You can contact principals or other office staff by calling the school directly and leaving a voicemail message. Our phone system is set to relay that phone message to staff so that the appropriate staff member can contact you with a return call. We have given our staff information that will allow them to hide their cell phone number when they call if they do not wish to share their cell phone number. Some staff may be comfortable sharing their cell phone and may call without using this blocking procedure. Whichever decision staff members make when they contact you, I am asking you to honor their choice.

Meal Delivery/Pickup

Starting Monday, March 23, 2020, students will be able to receive two meals at once each school day. Students that ride a bus can pick-up a breakfast and a lunch at their bus stop. Bus routes are posted on the website for parents and students to check. All bus stops will use the elementary stops. If your student is a middle school or high school student they should check with a neighborhood elementary student to determine the closest bus stop. Buses will deliver in the South Elementary attendance area between 9:30 am and 11:00 am. Buses will be delivering to the Eastview and Mifflin Elementary attendance areas between 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm daily. All students are eligible to receive a breakfast and lunch meal each day. Parents can sign-up for their children to receive meals by using the district website. The sign-up location is located in the banner at the top of the home page. Students that DO NOT ride a bus can pick-up their meals at the Madison Middle School each school day between 10 am to 12 pm.

Students must be physically present at the bus stop or the middle school to pick-up their meals. No meals will be given to adults trying to pick-up meals for students that are not with the adult.

Instruction

Teachers are working each school day to provide instruction to their students. Instructional delivery is being accomplished using a variety of methods that range from the printed packets of materials sent home Monday March 16th to online instruction and activities. Real time communication is being done using Google Classroom and a variety of other online apps. Teachers are available to students to answer questions or to provide explanations each school day during normal school hours. Teachers can be reached by email and they will be making calls home to parents at least once during this home-based instruction. Teachers and students are reinventing teaching and learning daily, and may need to continue to do this until the governor reopens schools.

Technology

The Madison Local School District has made the decision to provide a Chromebook to each home where students do not have access to a home computing device. Parents can obtain a contract to borrow a Chromebook from the district by printing a contract that can be found on the district website. The distribution of these Chromebooks has already taken place. If for some reason, you missed this scheduled distribution, please contact your school and leave a message requesting help in obtaining a Chromebook. If your home does not have access to the internet, there are several methods to obtain access. Some possible suggestions include:

1. Spectrum is offering 60 days free access and free installation
2. Neighbors may be willing to allow your children to have access to their internet signal which often goes beyond the walls of a home. You could request access from a neighbor during this crisis.
3. Some churches have internet access and may have space for a few children to work on school work in a Sunday School classroom
4. Our school buildings have internet signals that may be available from parking lots or by parking close to the building.
5. Library internet signals may also be accessible from their parking lots

Career Technical Education

The Madison Comprehensive High School Career Tech Center has been closed to all on site instructional services. Our Career Tech instructors are working with students using the internet whenever possible. Some lab work assignments are possible at home and some online assignments are being done. In a few cases, course work is very difficult to provide to all students in a class, such as welding. Teachers in Madison Local as well as teachers from across Ohio are working to develop lessons for these students.

Special Education and Related Services

Students in our Special Education programs are continuing to receive instruction daily from their Intervention Specialists/Teachers. Related Services staff are working to provide services to students that are required in their IEP's. Pupil services staff have designed procedures for conducting IEP amendments. This will enable changes in placement from school instruction to home instruction. All Pupil Services staff will continue to work on adjusting instructional delivery and other related services throughout this crisis to provide instruction and activities that meet the needs of students as identified in their IEP's.

Adult Education

The Adult Education Office Staff and Instructors continue to provide the full range of services to adult students from remote/home locations. As of Tuesday March 17, 2020, all instruction has been provided using the internet. This online instruction will continue until this crisis has ended.

Athletics

The Ohio High School Athletic Association has postponed all Winter Sports tournaments. Every effort is being made to reschedule these tournaments. In the most recent bulletin from that office, rescheduling is still possible, but they noted that the longer this goes on, the greater the likelihood that rescheduling may not be possible. Spring Sports practices had already started when the school closing order was given by Governor DeWine. When schools were temporarily closed, all Spring Sports and practice sessions were postponed. This postponement will continue for the duration of school closures. The hope is that some form of abbreviated spring sports schedule will still be possible, but this, too, is dependent on how soon we are able to return to the normal school schedule. We ask for your understanding and patience and your support for our student athletes as they deal with this disappointing set of circumstances.

Extra-curricular Activities

All extra-curricular activities have been postponed. Musicals, plays, awards ceremonies, and other culminating events that normally take place now are all on hold. Our hope is that we will still be able to hold many of these events, but this is all dependent on if and when, we are able to resume a normal schedule. Again, as with the sports programs, we ask for your understanding and patience and your support for our students as they deal with the disappointment that accompanies these postponements.

Central Office Operations

The Treasurer's office and staff there continue to operate from remote/home locations. Like all staff in the district they are doing their jobs, just differently than they normally would do them. Purchase orders are still being processed. Invoices are being paid and other routine work in this

office continues daily. The Superintendent's office is providing leadership and supervision to all divisions of the school district as we work to adjust and continue to provide services through this unprecedented health crisis.

Board of Education

The Board of Education members continue to perform their routine responsibilities to keep the district running. They will be holding the March Board of Education meeting next week on Wednesday March 25, 2020 at 6 pm at the Mid-Ohio Educational Service Center. The governor and attorney general have given boards' authority to hold public board meetings virtually during this crisis. The public will continue to be able to observe this meeting by attending through an online link which will be posted on our website next week. In addition to handling routine business, board members have been monitoring our constantly changing operational plans. Amy Walker, our board vice president, was able to join the Leadership Team, teachers, and support staff this past week as we met to develop our response to these changing circumstances. Amy was then able to provide the Board with summaries of what was happening. Finally, the superintendent search process closed on Friday 3/20/20. The Board will be meeting in Executive Session next Wednesday following the public session of the Board meeting, to screen and select applicants to be interviewed. The first round of interviews are scheduled to take place on Monday March 30th and Tuesday March 31st with final interviews scheduled to take place on April 14th.

Community Support

We have received many offers of help as a result of this crisis. Individuals have stepped up to offer to help prepare and/or deliver meals to students. Churches have been offering to help us provide meals to students during our shut down. I met Friday with three churches to begin coordinating their offer of assistance to help provide meals to students as a contingency plan in case we are ordered to stop providing meals. The outpouring of support has been wonderful and very much appreciated. The Madison Local School District Board of Education, teachers, support staff members, supervisors and administrators are all prepared and have come together to provide the services and actions needed during this crisis. As your Acting Superintendent, I am proud to be in this position and proud to be working with these wonderful and talented people. Your children are in good hands. When I arrived in this position 8 months ago, I found myself in a hornet's nest which was the result of the struggle that had taken place two year ago. I was asked by the Board to get things back on track and to operate the district this year. I was also asked not to make any changes and to help the administrators, teachers and support staff members to return to a more normal working relationship. We had been pursuing this for seven months and slowly making progress. Then the coronavirus struck. This crisis, which has the potential to cause horrible and tragic outcomes for many of us, has had the unexpected effect of bringing us together. I have lost count of the number of plans that we have developed and abandoned as a result of new decisions and changes in how we are allowed to operate. Your school system is coming together much faster than was happening just one week ago.

I have 49 years of experience in education. I have the knowledge and skills to be a superintendent. But I don't know any approach to leadership or any professional development activity that can produce the transformation that is taking place to restore relationships that had been severely broken by the events that occurred two years ago. I am blessed to be here, to be involved in this, and to be able to work alongside so many devoted men and women as they respond to these circumstances that none of us could have imagined one year ago. I invite you to join us and to support our efforts as we reinvent public education on a daily basis and as we strive to provide your children with an education that helps them to learn, grow, and to find hope in their future.

Sincerely,

John Thomas
Acting Superintendent