

MEMORANDUM

To: All APS Employees

From: Dr. Meria Joel Carstarphen, Superintendent

Date: April 3, 2020

Subject: Important Updates for APS Employees

These are unprecedented times for our school system, our city, and our country, and Atlanta Public Schools (APS) — thanks to all of you — has worked through uncharted territory at an incredibly fast pace these past three weeks. If you haven't noticed, APS has emerged as a leader among school districts in our response to COVID-19, especially in the way we have focused on the needs of our students through food distribution, efforts to increase internet connectivity, device distribution, and structured digital learning.

Whew! It has been a lot of work! I want to make you aware of a few things that will be different when we come back to work after Spring Break.

Now, it's the Friday before Spring Break. I want you to take full advantage of the time off next week. Use that time to get rest, recharge, and most importantly, get ready for what lies ahead for us for the rest of this school year. We may be closed for in-person instruction, but teaching and learning will continue in the virtual halls of our school district.

Hero Pay for Essential Employees

After spring break, we will be limiting the number of staff reporting to work in person. However, some of our front line workers will still be reporting to work in person, like those who clean facilities, aid in food distribution, or patrol facilities for security purposes. To honor their contributions, we will be implementing hero pay at a rate of time and a half for all hours worked in person beginning April 13 for designated employees working on site.

Limited Staff Access to Buildings

We will be limiting staff access to our buildings as part of our effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We care about the health and safety of all of you, and it's important that we continue to follow the guidelines provided by health officials and the current shelter-in-place order in Atlanta. Our Facilities crews are cleaning and restoring schools to a "Day One" look, and they are cleaning and disinfecting all furniture and high touch points in the schools, consistent with CDC guidelines.

To protect the health and safety of our employees and the integrity of the deep clean happening in our buildings, we will be implementing more strict building entry requirements for employees (not designated as essential) and a formal process for permission to enter, as follows:

- Chief Officers, Associate and Assistant Superintendents may designate employees with 24/7 badge access.
- For employees with 24/7 badge access, those badges will still access buildings, but access should be kept to an absolute minimum immediately after spring break, aside from food distribution.
- For employees without 24/7 badge access, those badges will not automatically open buildings. Employees should contact their supervisor to request entry to a building and provide a specific date or time 24 hours prior to entering. Access will be granted only from 8am to 5pm, and employees must have an APS ID for entry. Employees will only be permitted to retrieve necessary items to complete their job duties and then leave the building. You must notify APS Dispatch that you have left the building.

Changes in Food Distribution

After Spring Break, beginning Monday, April 13, we will be streamlining our meal distribution from providing meals five days a week to providing meals one day a week each Monday from 10 a.m. to Noon. It's important to remember that we will still be providing the same amount of food to our families as our daily service did. Families will receive five-day meal bags, containing five breakfast meals and five lunch meals and we will still provide bus delivery service. In addition, a bag of weekly groceries will also be available to families at our five anchor sites. Get the details at www.atlantapublicschools.us/fooddistribution.

Graduation Requirements and Status of Proms

We are continuing to support our high school seniors in meeting graduation requirements, and the expectation to complete coursework still stands. But, we are implementing waivers to support students for whom graduation requirements may be difficult to complete due to the city's shelter-in-place order. For example, I have authorized Associate Superintendent Dan Sims to provide a blanket waiver of the graduation requirement for community service hours to seniors who are otherwise graduation-eligible. The community service requirement for graduation is specific to APS, not the State of Georgia, so we can waive it to provide that flexibility to seniors now that community service opportunities are limited.

We have decided that there will be no in-person proms this year, in light of current guidance from health officials. However, schools have the flexibility to plan virtual events.

Thinking About the Budget

During this time period, we are revising our initial budget estimates downwards to be more conservative. Because of COVID-19, the Georgia General Assembly halted its current session before it could take action on the budget for next fiscal year. We will have a better understanding of our revenue picture in another month to a month and a half. To be clear, we have a bare-bones budget built and are ready to move forward with that if needed. Should additional revenue come in, we are prepared to fund other priorities aligned to our budget parameters, strategic priorities, and district mission.

Electronic Signatures on Documents

Given that we will be teleworking for the rest of the school year, some of our workflow processes will need to change. One of those processes is requiring original signatures on official APS documents. Because we are not physically situated in our buildings, I've asked each division Chief to work with their department heads to examine the documents they are responsible for and determine alternative approval methods where appropriate, including electronic signatures, scanned signatures, or email approval.

Stay Healthy Over the Break

Perhaps my most important message to you over Spring Break is to stay healthy and safe. I can't emphasize enough how important it is to do everything you can to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Continue to practice social distancing, don't gather in groups, and follow the guidance and orders from our elected leaders and health officials. I've shared a number of health resources with you, and you can find that information at www.atlantapublicschools.us/coronavirus.

While you're staying healthy, remember to have fun, relax, and breathe! This is your time, so focus on you. Enjoy your time off, and I'll see you in a week for the next phase of our work together in this virtual world.

Air hugs to you all, and have a happy, no-teleworking-no-teleschooling spring break!

Meria