March 13, 2020

Dear LRSD Community:

What an amazing 48 hours we’ve all lived through. Like you, I became aware of the Covid-19 virus several weeks ago. I had no idea how it would so directly impact our Little Rock School District community. These past two days have been remarkable, not only in the announcements that we’ve had to make, but also in the positive responses from our LRSD staff and community in supporting our students.

I don’t think it can be said enough that we all must be guided by the fact that we remove as much fear as we possibly can. The State has provided three significant tools to share information and to offer medical support for our citizens:

- [Healthy.Arkansas.gov](http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov) – current information from the Arkansas Department of Health
- [uamshealth.com](http://www.uamshealth.com) – 24-hour digital connection to healthcare professionals - UAMS
- 1-800-743-3616 – 24-hour hotline for issues related to children’s health – ACH

I want to personally thank staff who reported to work today on March 13th. We had a mixture of classified, certified, and administrators, who all came to their schools to help answer phones and to help with distribution of lunches to our students. Meeting the food needs of our students continues this weekend, as well as through all of next week, thanks to a unique partnership with multiple entities, all wanting to support families who may be economically challenged.

Attached here, you will find a news release from Mayor Frank Scott’s office regarding the food program that will impact the entire Little Rock community over the next several days. (Also included as a separate link.) It provides sites and schedules, so everyone can understand the grab-and-go opportunities for our students for breakfast and lunch.

I want to thank our community partners who have worked on this effort, which include the City of Little Rock, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, Central Arkansas Library System, the Clinton Foundation, and Rock Region Metro transportation.

This next paragraph might be important for all, but it is specifically directed to LRSD employees. Today, principals were provided a work plan designated for all year-round employees. We also contacted Transportation and Security classified employees to ask them to report to work next week to support our grab-and-go meal service. Other classified employees will not be asked to work next week, but will be asked to make up work days at the end of the school year in accordance with their contracts. This allows us to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and that no employee’s paycheck is impacted as we respond to the Covid-19 virus.
Here are a few other reminders that we believe will be helpful. All school-sponsored activities have been cancelled through the end of Spring Break, March 27th. This includes trips, practices for individual sports, the State Championship Basketball game between Central and Conway, and events (Artistry in the Rock, Computer Power Day, Chess Tournament, etc.). LRSD has also cancelled all out-of-state field trips and professional development travel through the end of this school year.

We will continue to update you using multiple communication channels, including ParentLink. You may select your preferred notification settings in ParentLink by visiting lrsd.parentlink.net. We can promise you that we will continue to update and communicate with you as new information becomes available.

Please remember to follow the basic healthy habits that have been repeatedly shared: frequent hand-washing, limit physical greetings, and call your doctor or use the UAMS website if you need medical advice. We know these are challenging times, but we will get through them together – through the “Power of US.” Thank you for your patience and continued support.

Sincerely,

Mike Poore
Superintendent of Schools