

April 17 – Family Update

Dear MCS Families,

I hope that you and your family are well. As I have done each Friday, I am sending an update to all MCS families and staff. My goal is to keep you informed about the work we are doing now and for the future, and equally as important, to demonstrate how our vision and values as a district are driving the decisions we make during this closure. We are and will continue to be in this together.

Our Commitment to Student Learning

I expect that many of you have recently seen other school districts shorten the school week or formally end the school year earlier in May. I also expect that you may want clarity from me on our intentions in MCS.

While I respect such decisions by other school districts, I do not feel this approach is right for MCS. All students, not just those struggling with learning challenges, food insecurity, or technology gaps, are at-risk for falling behind when 25.3% of their school year was thrust into a new reality. This is not a time to become disconnected as a school community or to lower our expectations for supporting our students. We will continue to make every effort to connect, engage, and learn from now until May 22 (our “normal” last day of school). As our community has experienced over the last four weeks, we will show compassion and understanding for each student and family and, at the same time, maintain an unwavering commitment to learning.

Summer Learning Opportunities

As we attempt to predict the unpredictable, I expect that any summer learning opportunities for students will be virtual only (no in-person remediation or enrichment). To that end, I will be seeking approval from the MCS BOE this coming Tuesday (at our regularly scheduled BOE meeting) to formally launch an optional K-8 and 9-12 summer learning plan for all MCS students. The proposal will include five weeks of virtual learning (in math and reading) for students in grades K-8; MHS students will have the opportunity to earn credits to get back on track to graduate during June and July. Both programs will be free for MCS students; more details will be shared following MCS BOE approval.

Continuity of Learning

I remain incredibly proud of our students and teachers. While our current situation is not perfect and certainly not ideal, 93% of our MCS students (grades K-12) have accessed Schoology since March 16. This exceptionally high connectivity rate demonstrates the strength of our teachers’ relationships with their students and our community’s commitment to a continuity of learning. I appreciate your willingness to support the work that our teachers are doing to continue engaging and teaching your children.

Meal Delivery

I just can’t find the right words so I’ll stick to the numbers:

- 4 nurses screening volunteers
- 18 bus routes
- 20 days of meal delivery
- 44 unwavering school nutrition staff
- 54 committed bus drivers, bus monitors, and mechanics

- 81 different bus stops per day
- 92,868 total meals
- 419 total staff volunteers
- Countless heroes

Connect-a-Kid

I offer a heartfelt thank you to our IT department and the many staff and community volunteers who have been distributing Chromebooks and hotspots before, during, and after spring break. To date, we have distributed 2,684 Chromebooks and 600 hotspots. We have also added WiFi routers to 12 MCS school buses to provide additional internet access throughout our school community.

Please know we will continue to provide devices to students who want and need one. If your student needs a device, we distribute them at the MCS central office (250 Howard Street) each Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Additionally, the following technology resources are available for students and families:

- Technology phone support (English and Spanish): 678-695-7215
- Technology email support (English and Spanish): techhelp@marietta-city.org
- Daily school bus wifi hotspots in select locations around Marietta: www.marietta-city.org/buswifi

Marietta HS Prom

School closure doesn't mean that we stop creating special moments for our students. In an effort to do just that, Principal Keith Ball is hosting a virtual MHS prom tomorrow, Saturday, April 18 from 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. (which happens to be the same night as prom was originally scheduled). While this event is provided for our juniors and seniors at MHS (and their guests), this new virtual format allows Blue Devils of all ages to dance the night away through our free, public [MHS Blue Devil News website](http://www.marietta-city.org/blue-devil-news). I've already promised my 4yo and 7yo daughters that our family will dress up and have a dance party in our living room. On behalf of Principal Ball and DJ Ricky Moss, a Marietta alumnus who will be taking your song requests through social media, I invite you to join the party! #MHSvirtualprom

In closing, thank you. I continue to be inspired by the many ways that those in our school community and city show love and support for one another. When I think about all of the uncertainty that this experience has created, I am reassured by the unwavering strength of our MCS family and our commitment to each other.

For the children,
Grant

Grant Rivera, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Marietta City Schools