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TSD COVID-19 Update 3.13.20 #2

School Buildings to close, Education is Open

Dear TSD Community,

To follow up on today's email regarding school closure and questions please find additional information below. Please keep in mind that this is a fluid and constantly moving topic. In my 30+ years in education this is uncharted territory for the Department of Education and guidance is being created real time.

Building Closure

The School buildings will close to the public as of Monday morning; however, education is still open. Teachers and staff will be in the buildings preparing lesson plans and communicating to their students and parents how to access lessons and what those will look like. In some cases, teachers may ask a student to come to the building to pick up a packet or drop off an assignment. Right now, our closure is based on the county restriction of 75 bodies in a space so we are comfortable with a student coming into the facility for direct help. This may change as we learn more about testing being done within the community and may cause entry to close completely.

The decision to close school was made based upon my communication with San Miguel County Department of Health and Environment. The Public Health officials urged compliance with the guidance to cancel events or gatherings of more than seventy-five people and to practice social distancing (staying at least 6 feet away from people). The school could not comply with this with classes in session. The goal is to flatten the illness curve to not max the capacity of the regional and state health systems.

Online Learning/Rigor of Curriculum

This afternoon I met with TES, TIS, TMHS to discuss what online learning will look like. This will vary school by school and class by class. I have asked classroom teachers PK-6 to communicate directly with their parents beginning today to start setting up what this will include. Sara Kimble will be sending an email to 7-12th grade parents. Monday will be utilized as a planning day for teachers to formulate lesson plans/platform/expectations, etc. Information from teachers will be sent out late Monday or early Tuesday.

In visiting classrooms today at the middle/high school it was heartwarming to hear students ask how they will be able to help their siblings as some had in their minds they will be the caregiver as parents work.

I also want to make sure the message is clear that students, parents, community need to engage and be a part of this online learning process. We are closing the buildings, but not education. We have 15 days of learning until Spring Break. If I cannot make the case to the Colorado Department of Education that rigor of curriculum occurred while the buildings were closed we may need to extend the school year. Teachers will be tracking attendance by student online check-in, packets being returned, i-Ready access, etc. As I shared with our older students this is not 15 days of Ski PE- maybe one or two!

Devices/Connectivity

Our tech department is working to prepare devices for students who need one. A survey went out on School Messenger regarding student needs. Please look for an email from School Principals when devices will be ready for pickup. Principals will also be collecting information on what students will need assistance with online access.

Our Technology department will have a help desk for the first week to aid students and parents with logins, devices and other tech related issues. We will have Spanish translation available as well.

CMAS/PSAT/SAT/AP

The State has delayed the CMAS window but has not released until when. Our reality is we may return from break and have one week to see what we can do. This is yet to be determined. We have yet to hear on AP tests.

School Lunches

We realize that many of our students rely on our Free and Reduced lunch program. I was humbled with the response of our community to make sure we take care of these students. We are working on a plan to figure out the logistics to pull this off and meet the USDA rules.

Hours school will be open/Service Desk

As of today, we are looking like 9-3 and will have Spanish language help as well. Parents will be able to preview apps and understand login procedures and feel competent before leaving. We will maintain some form of help desk throughout this event.

Kindergarten Registration

Please look for an email from Susan Altman, TES Principal, regarding Kindergarten Registration and letter of intent for Dual Immersion. She is looking at how this process could be done through other means of delivery.

Volunteers

We are fortunate to live in such a caring community. The offers of help to shuttle packets, run errands, provide a monetary donation for school food for students, day care for parents who have been impacted by this decision. Kim will be keeping a list if you would like to be added to volunteer support.

Criteria to re-open Schools

We will take our guidance from the Public Health Officials recommendations and communicate that to our parents as it develops.

Finally, I ask for us all to be compassionate to each other. The decision to close school facilities was not taken lightly and impacts everyone in this community. Our younger students are scared of what Coronavirus means and how it impacts them, our older students worry about bringing this disease home to parents or grandparents, financial impacts and graduation. I firmly believe with compassion and empathy our Telluride community will rise to the occasion and showcase our true spirit.

Respectfully,



Mike Gass, Superintendent

For most up to date information in San Miguel County please visit:

<https://www.sanmiguelcountyco.gov/590/Coronavirus>