



**COVID-19 Response, Release #4
(March 18, 2020)**

A lot changes in 24 hours.

As you all know by now, within minutes of the release of my message yesterday, Governor DeSantis held a press conference announcing all Florida school campuses would be shut down at least through April 14th. There were a number of other takeaways from his press conference, to which I will try to respond.

All districts have been instructed to operate virtually. We intend to begin virtual instruction on March 30th. I am in the process of speaking with all our stakeholders, but we will have a plan for what this will look like for all our teachers and staff, our students, and our parents by the middle of next week. Our plan is to work with our teachers, staff, and administrators the last part of the week to ensure the transition to distance learning is as smooth as we can make it. Our teams with Teaching and Learning as well as Instructional and Operational Innovation have been working non-stop on this rollout. I do ask for patience from everyone during this transition though. We are dealing with technology. As such, there are varying degrees of comfort with technology in both our educators and our students. Help will be made available to everyone who needs it.

For our teachers and staff, please keep an eye on your work email for additional information in the coming days.

We were all told to be prepared to extend our educational calendars through June 30, 2020. Does this mean the school year is now automatically moved? No. The Commissioner of Education has the authority to reduce required instructional hours and he has not ruled that out.

All district school board meetings are postponed through June 30, 2020. We do have some pressing business to conduct, such as approving a contract for my successor, Cathy Mittelstadt. As an aside, I will be meeting with Ms. Mittelstadt in the upcoming week as we begin work on our transition plan.

There are also a few bids that need to be accepted on work that needs to be done around our district. We are working to hold a virtual board meeting for emergency purposes and once those details are ironed out, we will inform the general public so that it is accessible.

There are a number of organizations that have a Use of Facilities agreement with our schools. Unfortunately, the guidelines from the Department of Education prohibit any mass gatherings on our properties during this time.

Finally, what about graduation and other events for the Class of 2020? All remaining assessments for school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten, and K-12 assessments are canceled for the remainder of the school year. Requirements for graduation and promotion and final course grades will be evaluated as though those assessments which were canceled did not exist. We are working to get clarification as to what this actually means for our students who may have been at risk for graduation. As soon as we receive that, we will pass it along to you.

Are we going to have graduation or promotion ceremonies this year? We hope our graduates and their families will get to experience these meaningful events. However, we will need to take our guidance from the Florida Department of Education, as well as the federal and state health experts. Right now, we simply do not have the information to answer the question.

As I posted yesterday, our Food and Nutrition Services team will offer “grab-and-go” meals (lunch and breakfast), starting Monday, March 23rd. These are for children 18 years of age and younger and will be offered at Flagler-Palm Coast High School, Buddy Taylor Middle/Wadsworth Elementary School, Indian Trails Middle School, and Bunnell Elementary School. They will be available for pick up from 10 am until noon. We are asking if you are able, please complete a short [Google Form](#) for us so we can get a better idea of the turnout. This is NOT a requirement to receive the meals. It is for planning purposes only.

Again, we are trying to keep everyone informed as we move forward. We want only the best for our students, teachers, staff, and administrators and we are doing all we can to ensure success as we move through this most unexpected time of our lives.

Enthusiastically Yours,

James Tager
Superintendent, Flagler Schools