

March 16, 2020

Dear families,

As you are already aware The Government of Alberta has declared a province wide school cancellation. As of today, all MHPSD classes are cancelled until further notice.

Today we face an unprecedented challenge. We are asked to pull together and find ways to support the continued learning of our students, while simultaneously protecting public health. Alberta Education has asked that systems work together to design an equitable approach to addressing these challenges. This process has already begun in conjunction with Alberta Education, the Alberta Teachers' Association and other partners. The outcome is to be a province wide framework for instruction that, while it may var from system to system, ensures that all have access to the instruction and supports they need in order to be successful in the outcomes that are selected as most critical.

Rest assured that this plan is being crafted by skilled, loving and committed individuals from across the province and here at home who are aiming to meet the needs of all students we serve. We know that nothing can replace the in-person connection between a student and a teacher. We will miss our regular connection with our students and their families.

We have been asked to collaborate to ensure that this immense task is accomplished well. We ask that families give us, and our staff, time to work with our provincial partners to build our plan. Teachers and school staff are not positioned to answer detailed questions about what programming will look like, and so we thank you in advance for your patience. Remember, we are short staffed and are working to build ways to provided blended programming to greater than 7000 students. We promise to provide an update at the beginning of next week as to our progress and when programming will begin.

School cancellation does not mean school closure. All school staff (who are well) will be at work and planning for programming needs for our students. Once a provincial direction is developed, we will be in touch to begin programming again. Know that Alberta Education is working with us to develop plans that meet the needs of graduating students with respect to college and university admission. Likewise, we will be shaping our plan to ensure that we are mindful of the needs of students with Individual Student Plans (ISPs) and all others by making strategic use of our ability to welcome students to school under well planned and carefully scheduled circumstances.

Prior to restarting programming, each school is developing a plan for families to gather student belongings. Schools will provide direction to families shortly, about how this will work. Please watch your email and check your school website or social media for updates.

Your child's teacher, or another member of the teaching staff, will be in touch to ensure that we stay connected. They will have some questions for you that will help guide our planning. We want to gather information about access to high speed internet, access to a device for completing schoolwork online and when your child might be available to come to school for face-to-face support; all information that will help us plan for program delivery.

We want to thank everyone who has reached out to show their support. Our staff are all in to build a solution that supports student learning while honouring the community's need for attention to public health.

Be well,

Mark Davidson, Superintendent