

Update: CCPS Response to the Coronavirus Crisis

March 23, 2020

Hello again, this is Tony Brads, Division Superintendent for Culpeper County Public Schools.

On behalf of the school division, I want to provide another update on several key items related to the current school closure ordered by the Governor which was scheduled to end on Friday, March 27, 2020. As you have probably heard from the Governor's news release today, schools in the Commonwealth have been ordered to close for the remainder of the school year. The items addressed today will include:

School Closure

Definition of Essential Personnel

Building Access by the Public and by Non-Essential Employees

Continuation of Learning

Special Education Meetings

Employee Work Expectations and Compensation

School Food Services

Culpeper County Critical Infrastructure Personnel Childcare Service

Coronavirus Best Practices

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School Closure

First, let me begin by addressing the major announcement today related to the Governor's order extending the school closure for the remainder of the school year. We do not have all of the answers related to this unprecedented event at this time. Rest assured, we will provide updates to our students, families, and staff members based upon guidance from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) as soon as possible. We know this is difficult for everyone to process, especially our graduating seniors.

Definition of Essential Personnel

Essential CCPS staff members are defined as those employees who are practicing flexible scheduling and involved with the areas of finance, human resources, food service feeding programs, childcare and health services for critical infrastructure personnel, technology support, maintenance, certain transportation staff, and certain environmental services staff.

Building Access by the Public and by Non-Essential Employees

All CCPS facilities are closed to the public. Additionally, non-essential employees will not have access to their offices, classrooms, and workspaces. Any access by the non-essential employees will require prior permission by their supervisor and will be limited to special circumstances.

Continuation of Learning

We expect VDOE to provide clarification related to instructional and accountability expectations. One of the most critical aspects pertains to our graduating seniors. VDOE will be providing updates regarding the awarding of standard and verified credits, grades, GPAs, credentials, and the requirements for seniors as well as all other students moving forward.

School and division staff have already been reviewing graduation requirements, the progress toward graduation for all high school Seniors, and potential distance learning opportunities to help students meet all necessary requirements.

VDOE has completed their application to waive federal requirements related to testing. When the VDOE and state officials receive the necessary approvals for waiving SOL assessments and graduation requirements, schools will communicate that message to Seniors.

With support from the division, individual schools will continue to handle how they communicate learning opportunities to students and families. This may occur through posting of resources on the division website, online opportunities, email, Google Meets, and phone calls.

Division staff are in communication with Germanna Community College, Lord Fairfax Community College and J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College regarding the options for the continuation of Dual Enrollment courses. The College Board has already communicated, to students, the plans for online AP testing later this spring.

All logistics related to the continuation of learning will be shared following the release of additional information from VDOE. Please note that this effort to work with our students during the closure is intended to maintain good practices, study habits, and educational engagement. Teachers should consider the educational value of all work they post for students. While work completed related to these resources will not be graded, feedback to students is appropriate and expected.

We encourage all students to take a break from screen time and keep reading.

Special Education Meetings

During the closure, school divisions are required by federal law to continue to hold special education meetings, including IEP and Eligibility meetings. Meetings will be held by phone and/or video conferencing with the usual IEP team members participating, including special education teachers, general education teachers, and building administrators. Parents and school meeting participants will be contacted regarding the date and time of meetings, along with instructions on how to participate. There is additional information for parents on the CCPS website.

Employee Work Expectations and Compensation

CCPS employees should not report unless designated as essential personnel related to the Coronavirus crisis. Again, essential CCPS staff members are limited to those employees who are practicing flexible scheduling and involved with the areas of finance, human resources, food service feeding programs, childcare for critical infrastructure personnel, technology support, maintenance, certain transportation staff and certain environmental services staff. Employee compensation for all salaried staff will continue as normal. Full-time and part-time employees subject to hourly calculations will continue to receive their compensation based upon previous normal work hours. It's important for employees to know that they should not be concerned about their compensation or benefits during the school closure. We are diligently working with the County on the FY21 Budget process with a goal of meeting key timelines in order to prepare employee contracts for the next school year.

School Food Services

During the first week of the school closure, CCPS in cooperation with Culpeper Human Services has provided meals at 4 locations. Today marked a change in the meal distribution plan by reducing the number of daily pick up times while increasing the number of meals provided. These drive-through opportunities have been successful but based on parent and staff feedback, we have made adjustments. Additionally, as the closure order has been extended, we are planning possible changes to the meal distribution plan, possibly taking effect next week or week three of the school closure. All students will continue to be eligible for meals at no charge to the student or family.

Culpeper County Critical Infrastructure Personnel Childcare Service

CCPS partnered with Culpeper Human Services to assist our critical infrastructure agencies and organizations in Culpeper County by providing childcare services for children between the ages of 4-12 years of identified essential personnel. This service will continue to operate at Farmington Elementary School from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM Monday-Friday. This childcare program will continue to be offered indefinitely provided the need exists and we are able to staff the program. We will be appealing to CCPS employees who might be able to assist with staffing the program. Nurses will continue

to be on-site and available to screen children and staff for any symptoms of illness prior to admission each day. This childcare service has already proved to be an invaluable asset for the essential personnel serving in critical positions that care for and protect the rest of us.

Coronavirus Best Practices

Continue to practice proper hygiene with frequent hand washing and practice social distancing in all interactions. Even with social distancing, remember to keep groups or gatherings to ten or fewer people. Again, be mindful that even though an individual may seem healthy and is not presenting with any symptoms, that individual may be a carrier of the virus. Please pay special attention if your friends or family members are in groups that have greater risk factors. CCPS screenings will not include testing for the Coronavirus.

Frequently Asked Questions

Lastly, I want to address Frequently Asked Questions. CCPS has created a Coronavirus FAQ section on the CCPS website. If the FAQ area does not have the answer to your question, please feel free to contact us at 540-825-3677.

Again, thank you for your patience and understanding during these challenging times. CCPS will provide updates as frequently as possible through different formats as information becomes available. Stay well.