



M.E.T.S. CHARTER SCHOOL

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Damion Frye, Lead Administrator

March 13, 2020

Dear M.E.T.S. Charter School Community;

Our leadership team has spent the past few weeks researching and monitoring the rapidly changing COVID-19 coronavirus health issue in our region and across the world. The NJ State Commissioner of Education recommended last week that districts engage in contingency planning for the possibility of extended school closure should the situation in our state dramatically change in the coming weeks. During our professional development on March 11th, our staff prepared for an online structure for our students.

However, I now believe that the time has come for our district community to make an important shift. **Both school sites will be closed beginning Monday, March 16th for up to 14 days** while we continue to monitor the situation and health department recommendations. We have previously communicated plans ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)) to transition instruction from classroom to cloud (online learning) beginning Monday, March 16th. This decision was made thoughtfully and with the support of a variety of district and community leaders.

Access to Technology:

As per my previous communication, yesterday March 12th, if your family needs access to a Chromebook and/or an internet Hot-Spot, you will need to do the following:

- Sign the letter that was distributed yesterday. (This letter was distributed to students and is available to be printed from our website www.metscharterschool.org.)
- Between Monday, March 16th, and Wednesday, March 18th, you and/or your child must return the signed letter to the school.
- At such time you can pick up the equipment from 8:30 am - 10:30 am.
- Any equipment must be returned within 24 hours of school reopening.

Access to Breakfast and Lunch:

Any student who would like to receive breakfast or lunch will have access to the cafeteria from 8:30 am - 10:30 am daily. All students are welcome to go directly to the cafeteria. No students will be permitted in the rest of the facilities.

Reporting an Absence:

If your child must go to the doctor or be “absent” (refer to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6 for excused reasons), you must call the school and leave a message reporting the absence. All of your child’s work still must be completed and submitted within the deadline the teacher sets.

- In the voicemail, include your student’s first and last name, grade level, date, and reason for their absence.



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Why am I making the decision today?:

Multiple individuals from across our region are in self-quarantine because they may have been exposed to the COVID-19 coronavirus. While we are working to minimize exposure of our students by making sure the education continues online, we are also concerned about the health of our staff. The new public health recommendations to slow the spread of coronavirus we received following today's press conference indicate that those people at higher risk should stay home and away from large groups of people as much as possible; e.g., those with weakened immunity, pregnancy and those who are 60 and over. We also have numerous staff that have other identified high-risk factors making the safe operation of our schools untenable.

What about our students' education?

Let me be clear: Education is a service to which our district is resolutely committed. To that end, we are shifting our education from the physical classroom to Google Classroom. Our job is to provide quality instruction to our students in a safe and welcoming environment, and we are no longer able to provide quality instruction and maintain an environment that is safe for our staff and students to learn as we do not have sufficient staff to safely operate our schools. By transitioning from the classroom to Google Classroom, we are also giving medical/public health officials and the community time to get some critical answers regarding incubation period, level and length of contagious status, and fatality rates, as well as a communication strategy that includes all necessary partners. After Wednesday, March 11th's training, our instructional staff have and will continue to develop their skills for providing instruction to our students within an online environment.

What about my child who requires special education services?

Instructional staff who provide services to our students with disabilities will make every effort to deliver the service minutes indicated in each student's IEP utilizing the platforms available. When services return to the classroom setting, IEP teams can meet to determine if additional services are needed. The education of our students is dependent on our entire community. While the idea of online instruction or blended learning is not new to our instructional team, moving instruction fully online is a journey that we will all navigate together. If you have a specific question or concern about online learning or a technology issue, please email your case manager.

During these next few weeks, please be safe and let your building administrator know if you need support.

With Hope for a Cure Soon,

Mr. Frye
Lead Administrator