

# Guidance for Remainder of the Year Dr. Jan Irons Harris, Superintendent

April 2, 2020



Dear Dade County Parents and Students,

We are in the midst of unprecedented times. As I stated earlier, the only constant is change. Yesterday, Governor Kemp closed all K-12 schools in Georgia for the remainder of the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Like you, I am mourning the death of our school year. In particular, my heart is wounded for our Class of 2020 as the members approach the finality of their educational careers in Dade County without the rituals previously established by tradition. However, be assured that Mr. Fahrney and his DCHS Team are working on new avenues for all celebrations. Stay tuned.

Over the past three weeks, DCS employees have provided for our students through digital learning. Additionally, SNP Director Dr. Cleta Long and her Managers (Bonnie Doerrwaechter, Pam Spurgin, Trinity Stafford, and Sharon Phillips) and SNP ladies have provided 37,168 meals to our students. We want to thank Transportation Supervisor John Smith and our Bus Drivers for distributing these meals. Additionally, we thank the principals, employees and volunteers who helped us with this important process. And, we thank our custodians who are working tirelessly to sanitize our facilities.

Our Counselors and Social Worker have made home visits when needed to assist our students and parents. Our Teachers have worked long hours teaching our students through new platforms and they are to be commended for their leadership and work ethic. Our students are working hard as well, and we are proud of them as always. Our parents are supportive and we are thankful for your support. We are like Lewis and Clark exploring new territory together.

And, now we find ourselves in a new virtual environment as we strive to do something never attempted on a large scale: create meaningful distance learning opportunities for all of our students. Based on guidance from the Georgia Department of Education along with input from school and district leaders, guidelines are stated below to frame the learning process for the remainder of the year. It is our intention, to the best of our ability, to provide a meaningful educational experience for ALL of our students, including students with disabilities, EL students and those with limited internet access.

Guidelines:

**DIGITAL LEARNING will continue three days a week starting after Spring Break**(Parents, this is decreased based on your input through the surveys this week.) Digital Learning will be on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. On Tuesday and Thursday, students will work on assignments, catch-up on work and focus on social-emotional learning. We encourage students to stay on a schedule each day and participate in physical education and enjoy the beautiful outdoors. Students are encouraged to set up a work station in the dining room, kitchen or family room.

Teachers will provide essential, remedial and enrichment instruction each day from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Parents and Teachers and Students are encouraged to abide by this schedule to alleviate stress during this difficult time. Teachers will strive to send communications no later than 4:00 p.m. each day. Teachers will focus on essential standards for most students and will provide remediation where needed. Students who are gifted will be encouraged to participate in enrichment opportunities.

**GRADES will be based on a philosophy of HELP NOT HURT**For example, if a student had a C prior to the shutdown, he/she will have the opportunity to raise that grade to B or A, but the grade will not be lowered. Students will complete assignments in order to receive credit for classes.

**PROMOTION/RETENTION will work as it did in the past**Principals and Teachers will determine eligibility.

**MEAL DISTRIBUTION will continue, but the process may change as we go forward.**

In closing, even though most of our team members are not in the normal classrooms and offices, rest assured that we are here – in our homes at our work stations doing the very best we can for your deserving students. I am praying daily that God will bless each of you and keep you healthy and safe. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need us.

With warmest regards and a big virtual hug for our precious students,

Dr. Jan Irons Harris  
Superintendent  
Dade County Schools

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