

Brent H. Colbry
Superintendent of Schools

Jonathan D. Moody
Assistant Superintendent

David A. Leavitt
Support Services Manager

MEMO Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Date: 3-15-2020

Dear Parents/Guardians, Students and Community,

I am writing to let you know that in response to guidance provided over the weekend specific to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in consultation with our board of directors, we have decided to close all of our schools for two weeks beginning on Monday, March 16, and lasting until Friday, March 27. This closure is a proactive measure designed to allow staff to meet, plan, and have additional time to receive guidance. This school closure applies to all MSAD 54 Schools facilities including MSAD 54 Adult Education and the Somerset County Regional Technical Center (SCTC). Additionally, all outside facility uses will be suspended until further notice.

As you know, this has been a rapidly evolving situation. While we are not aware of cases reported in our MSAD 54 communities, medical experts have provided detailed guidance about the need to take this proactive measure of closing our schools. After extensive conversations with area superintendents, the State, other school district officials, and in consultation with our administrative team and school board, we have determined that this closure is the only responsible action to take at this time.

This decision has been made with careful consideration of the options. We are aware of the fact that closing schools will be a hardship for all families. For our most disadvantaged community members, it will represent an even greater hardship. While our team has been working diligently to prepare for school closings, the rapidly changing nature of this situation has not allowed adequate time for us to provide alternate forms of education and nutrition this week. We intend to provide updated guidance on the timing of these services on the evening of Tuesday, March 17.

On Monday and Tuesday of this week, all MSAD 54 instructional staff will be in school. During this time we will finalize plans that had begun last week and develop take-home packets/resources to provide students with learning opportunities that can be completed at home. Additionally, we have worked with our food-services program to develop a plan for community distribution of meals. Starting Wednesday, March 18, the district's Central Office, along with each school's Principal's office, will operate with essential staff, but they will be closed to the public unless otherwise notified. We will make information available to our families on Tuesday, March 17, regarding a plan which includes the location and timeline for meal distribution in our communities. Up-to-date information will be provided on our website (<http://www.msad54.org/public>) as it is released.

It is important that all families practice and enforce strict social distancing during this time. If we want to prevent the need to keep our schools closed beyond the extended timeline, it will be incumbent upon us all to make the sacrifices required to contain the spread of the coronavirus. We will provide updated information on our website and will continue to provide district notices as further information is available.

Please know that we do not take this action lightly and will continue to communicate regularly with our families moving forward.

Sincerely,



Brent Colbry
Superintendent of Schools