Dear RPS Staff,

Rochester Public Schools (RPS) is monitoring the situation regarding the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as it continues to evolve. We participated today in a teleconference with the Minnesota Departments of Health and Education and observed the Governor’s press conference on this topic.

As of today, March 15, 2020, Governor Tim Walz and Education Commissioner Mary Cathryn Ricker have issued an executive order for school closures across the entire state of Minnesota from March 18 through March 27. Rochester Public Schools will be following this directive. In addition, Spring Break is scheduled from March 30 - April 3. **This means RPS students will not attend school from Wednesday, March 18 - April 5.**

The Governor has designated March 18 through March 27 as a planning period to prepare for remote learning in the event that closures extend beyond this time period. All staff will report as scheduled during the planning period except for those considered high-risk for COVID-19.

**Employees in High-Risk Categories:**

If you are considered to be in the high-risk category (review the CDC guidelines found at the bottom of this email) for COVID-19, please make plans to work from home at this time. Follow regular absence reporting procedures for Monday and Tuesday. You will be asked to provide documentation of your medical condition to Human Resources. There will be more information from Human Resources in the near future.

**Timeline for the next three weeks:**

* **March 16 and March 17:** students and staff will report as normal. Families may opt to keep their students at home and this will be considered an excused absence. Please continue to follow our regular process of contacting the school if your student will be absent on either of these days. Regular School Age Child Care (SACC) will be available for registered participants.
* **March 18 through March 27:** School is closed for students and no instruction will be provided. All staff report as normally scheduled. This time is provided for all staff to plan for a possible extended school closure**.**
* **March 28 through April 5:** RPS Spring Break. Students do not report, staff should follow their contract/work agreement.
* **April 6:** At this point, we anticipate teaching and learning will resume either in person or via distance learning depending on guidance from Governor Walz.

**After school activities:**

All after school activities, practices, events, and building rentals are canceled beginning Wednesday, March 18, until further notice. This includes all Community Education programs.

We realize there are many unanswered questions at this point. We want to assure you we are making every effort to identify and address key issues. In addition to the planning that you will engage in at your sites, we will be pulling together small groups of leaders over the next several days to finalize plans to facilitate ongoing operations.

Rely on District communication for accurate information. Please check your email for District and school updates.

Thank you,

Michael Muñoz

Superintendent

Rochester Public Schools

***CDC guidelines for underlying medical conditions that may increase the risk of serious COVID-19 for individuals of any age:***

* **Blood disorders**(e.g., sickle cell disease or on blood thinners)
* **Chronic kidney disease**as defined by your doctor. Patient has been told to avoid or reduce the dose of medications because kidney disease, or is under treatment for kidney disease, including receiving dialysis
* **Chronic liver disease**as defined by your doctor. (e.g., cirrhosis, chronic hepatitis) Patient has been told to avoid or reduce the dose of medications because liver disease or is under treatment for liver disease.
* **Compromised immune system (immunosuppression)**(e.g., seeing a doctor for cancer and treatment such as chemotherapy or radiation, received an organ or bone marrow transplant, taking high doses of corticosteroids or other immunosuppressant medications, HIV or AIDS)
* **Current or recent pregnancy**in the last two weeks
* **Endocrine disorders**(e.g., diabetes mellitus)
* **Metabolic disorders**(such as inherited metabolic disorders and mitochondrial disorders)
* **Heart disease**(such as congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease)
* **Lung disease**including asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (chronic bronchitis or emphysema) or other chronic conditions associated with impaired lung function or that require home oxygen
* **Neurological and neurologic and neurodevelopment conditions**[including disorders of the brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerve, and muscle such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy (seizure disorders), stroke, intellectual disability, moderate to severe developmental delay, muscular dystrophy, or spinal cord injury].