



## COLUMBIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Wildcat Family:

As we conclude another school year, I think the old saying goes, "this one is for the books." When it comes to school, we are used to a calendar that does not typically delineate very much. We plan our lives and our children's programs according to those schedules. Our school and work schedules provide structure to our lives. By now, we realize that COVID-19 has changed everything. Managing our daily process is a chore most days. We are dealing with the days running together and adapting to an ever-changing model.

Winding up one school year always leads to the dawn of a new school year. Many, including myself, question what that will bring. Regrettably, at this moment, it is difficult to predict how the next school year may look. Unlike anything previous, we know this virus has no regard for our regular calendar.

Consequently, when it comes to the 2020-2021 school year, the determination on how learning will proceed depends on the health and well-being of our students and staff. Rest assured, we examine every report from every agency on best practices for the reopening of schools. In the meantime, we are proactively anticipating and planning for the complicated scenarios that may come ahead to reopen our schools. As you may have heard by now, the CDC has published guidelines to reopen schools. We envision these guidelines could shift in the weeks to come. Still, there are only so many outlines that will allow a school to operate. Briefly, I want to give three possible scenarios that could present themselves for the 2020-2021 school year. Developing guidelines could present different situations in the future.

- Schools reopen to what we consider normal—limited social distancing and other public health mitigation strategies.
- Schools reopen with physical distancing and or other public health mitigation strategies. This scenario would likely include some face to face instruction combined with remote learning. We realize that this scenario is complex and challenging and would provide multiple logistical, financial, and operational challenges.
- School buildings remain closed, and we revert to our distance learning plan instituted in March. We recognize this scenario provides many difficulties as well.

Indeed, we hope that schools reopen to what we consider normal. We also realize that you will have questions regarding each plan presented. Again, as we receive guidance from the Mississippi Department of Education, Mississippi Health Department, and the governor's office, and receive direction from our board of trustees in the coming weeks, we will update you with the plan to move forward. No matter where we head, we know challenges await us. I can ensure that CSD administration, teachers, and staff will deliver as we have in the past.

Summer learning will take place as Governor Reeves outlined. Students in grades 3-11 will keep their Chromebook over the summer to enable them to access remediation and enrichment activities created by our teachers. Over the past few weeks, our teachers have been developing Math and ELA courses for grades 3-8, and ACT prep courses for 9-11. The sessions will open on June 1 and remain open until June 26. These courses will be available on Canvas to Columbia School District students currently in grades 3-11. We strongly encourage *all* students to take advantage of these resources to better prepare them for the next school year. We recommend an average of 10 hours a week, five on ELA, and five on Math for June. Teachers will be monitoring these courses and will be available for questions and concerns.

Columbia School Districts' summer feeding program will begin on June 1. The summer feeding program will take place at Columbia High School from June 1-25, 2020, and July 6-23, 2020. Meals will be served as a grab and go breakfast and lunch bags from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

Lastly, I want to thank our teachers for another great school year. These last nine weeks would not have gone as smoothly without them. As I have mentioned various times prior, our teachers are the backbone of our school district.

In closing, as we celebrate Memorial Day on Monday, I want to thank our servicemen and women for their service to our country. As the son of a veteran, I realize that the many sacrifices you make allow us the freedom we enjoy. Franklin Roosevelt famously stated, "Those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we enjoy forget in time that men have died to win them."

I hope that everyone has a safe and happy Memorial Day and that it is a prelude to a great and safe summer!

As a reminder, regular updates will be available via the web at:

<https://www.columbiaschools.org/covid-19>

Respectfully,



Jason Q. Harris, Ph.D.  
Superintendent