



March 25, 2020

Message to Parents/Guardians:

I feel it necessary to begin with the fact that we too are searching for any definitive information from the State with reference to how long this shut-down will last for our schools. I fully recognize the open-ended nature of this closure puts undue stress on many of us; however, it is quite clear that no one truly knows how long this may last at this time. We will be ready to resume “normal” academic and educational activities as soon as the closure order is lifted. We want nothing more than to have our students back in our schools doing what we do best.

In light of Governor Evers’ [“Safer at Home” Executive Order #12](#) issued on March 24, 2020 (which went into effect on March 25, 2020) I thought it would be an appropriate time to update you on how this impacts WRPS and its families.

In short, the most recent order does not impact schools to any significant degree; however, **we are required to “close” our school playgrounds to further discourage the gathering of people.** By and large, the approach that we began with off-campus educational programming will continue indefinitely. As I communicated to you on March 20<sup>th</sup>, the statewide school closure will continue beyond April 6<sup>th</sup> and given the current circumstances, our plan is to proceed with off-campus learning and support as we have been doing until directed otherwise by the State. As a reference, the Governor’s most recent order is in effect until April 24, 2020 or until changed by another order. In the event that we are able to re-open schools, we will provide ample notice to parents, students, and the community to allow for appropriate planning.

Thankfully, we have been provided some relief in the areas of testing requirements and minutes of instruction as the Department of Public Instruction has announced that our school district can apply for a waiver due to the on-going public health emergency. This means that we will not be required to make up any instructional time nor will students be required to take State-level tests this school year. Given the fact that our off-campus learning will continue indefinitely, our approach continues to be reviewed and may change in certain areas to focus more on educational enrichment and support for students in grades 4K-8; while grades 9-12 will continue to concentrate on students meeting graduation requirements. High School Administration and staff are in the process of developing more detailed information for our 9-12 students and parents. Again, more specifics about this will be provided by your individual school.

We also recognize that some families may be experiencing particularly difficult hardships the longer these circumstances continue; our goal is to continue to focus on helping families connect with appropriate resources to receive whatever support they may need to help see them through. Please reach out to your school to express any concerns or unmet needs that you may have so that they can direct you to resources that may be helpful.

Our school and administrative offices throughout the District have essentially been “closed” as we’ve had to move personnel off-campus to work from their homes as much as possible in order



to abide by the Governor's "Safer at Home" directive. You can still call building office phones or send emails with questions as staff members continue to check these on a regular basis. Limited staff members performing essential functions will continue to report to work at our buildings, but regular in-person visits will not be occurring with school offices closed. Questions concerning this may be directed to your building's principal. Rest assured that if your child(ren) has personal items/belongings still at school, there will be an opportunity sometime in the future for those items to be picked up. You will also be able to return school items (books, technology equipment, etc.) at some point in time in the future. If you have an urgent need to retrieve something, work with your school office to make those arrangements.

With regard to our free meal program, the Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools Food Service program will continue providing free meals to **all** children ages 18 and under as long as the school shut-down due to COVID-19 lasts. The week of March 30 - April 3 we will continue providing meals on a daily basis, just as we did prior to Spring Break. **Note the changes being implemented beginning Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>.**

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### **Monday, March 30, 2020 - Friday, April 3, 2020**

Families will be able to drive-thru or walk up to receive their grab-and-go meals **each day of the week, Monday - Friday**, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the following locations:

- **Lincoln High School**, 1801 16<sup>th</sup> St. So., Wisc. Rapids (front parking lot)
- **Mead Elementary School**, 241 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. So., Wisc. Rapids (side entrance on Alton Street)
- **THINK Academy**, 6950 Knowledge Ave., Rudolph, WI (front entrance)

Children will receive a grab-and-go lunch plus breakfast for the next day.

**Beginning Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>**, we will provide meals on Mondays and Thursdays only, but we will send families home with enough food for their children for the days in between. The THINK Academy location will no longer be a meal site – if you had been getting meals from this location, please plan to go to one of the other sites where meals are being offered. Below you will find details about where and when meals will be provided.

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- **Lincoln High School**, 1801 16<sup>th</sup> St. So., Wisc. Rapids (front parking lot)
- **Mead Elementary School**, 241 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. So., Wisc. Rapids (side entrance on Alton Street)



On Mondays, children will receive food for 3 breakfasts and 3 lunches (for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday meals). On Thursdays, they will receive food for 2 breakfasts and 2 lunches (for Thursday and Friday meals).

Free meals are available to all children, not just those attending WRPS.

This program is solely for the pick-up of meals; meals will not be consumed on-site. We encourage families to continue to be proactive in reducing the risk of COVID-19 by not congregating at the pick-up locations. Continue to wash your hands often, sneeze or cough into a tissue, and stay home if you are sick.

If you are unable to pick-up meals, plan ahead by calling the Food Services line at 715-424-6703 ext. 2, **by 9:00 a.m. on the days of meal service**, and we will deliver meals for each child under 18 in the home on the days that meal pick-ups are scheduled. Questions? Call the number provided above, or email Food Services Director Elizabeth Messerli at [elizabeth.messerli@wrps.net](mailto:elizabeth.messerli@wrps.net).

*Note that program locations and times are subject to change but families will be informed of any changes. Meals available while supplies last. WRPS is an equal opportunity provider.*

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WRPS takes the “Safer at Home” directive very seriously, and we want to stress the importance for everyone to stay at home as much as possible as we all do our part to mitigate and slow the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak.

As I’ve stated in prior communications, these are unprecedented times and uncharted waters that we are wading through; I sincerely appreciate everyone’s patience and understanding as we work together to get through this. Please watch for more communication coming directly from your child(ren)’s school office and teaching staff.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me anytime at [craig.broeren@wrps.net](mailto:craig.broeren@wrps.net).

Sincerely,

Craig G. Broeren, Superintendent