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April 10, 2020

To Our RSU 13 Families:

As of this week, and referenced as a possibility in last week's letter, we now have a clear picture of how long our buildings will remain closed, which will be through the end of this school year. If we are given any other options, families will be notified, but this recommendation by Commissioner Pender Makin allows us to make decisions and focus on long-range plans. We know this recommendation leaves families with many other uncertainties in their lives, but we want to assure you that RSU 13 continues to work tremendously hard to address the needs of our students inclusive of both their well-being and nutrition as well as their education. While we do not have all of the answers yet, we hope that this letter provides families with some clarity around serving our students.

Student Well-Being:

Prior to our current situation, RSU 13 placed Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) on par with academics. Given the current state we are all in together, students' social and emotional health are prioritized to an even greater degree. During the first three weeks of the closure of our buildings, we asked that all educators focus primarily on establishing connections and continued support and relationships with their students. Educators have done this in some very meaningful and creative ways from video announcements, to rotating through teachers doing read-alouds, to Zoom meetings, to creating YouTube channels. Although we are now introducing new learning for our students, which is outlined further below, you will note that our top priority is still relationships and student well-being.

Nutrition:

We want to remind you that *any child who is 18 or under living in our community can sign up for breakfast and lunch*. If you have not already signed up, please access our website or go directly to www.rsu13.org/OrderLunch where instructions are located.

New Instruction:

At last night's School Board meeting, the Board approved our "Emergency Learning" plan. We recognize that we are not able to deliver the same level of services and instruction to students as we can when we are open. We also know that while we are all in this one-size fits all pandemic, we are *not* all dealing with one size fits all circumstances by any means. As a result, we are instituting "Emergency Learning" in which we prioritize the following in this order: (1) Relationships and student well-being; (2) Activities that allow for communication and collaboration; creativity and problem-solving; and critical thinking; (3) New content and skills as appropriate while working to meet students where they are and take them as far as we can.

We continue to offer our support and learning five days a week Monday through Friday, and our staff is here for you. In addition, our technology support hotline is 207-466-8000 or you can email at support@rsu13.org. Families without access to the internet in order to access assignments can download assignments from hotspots located at all of our schools. Our Wifi is password protected, but all of our student devices have the ability to access the WiFi at any of our school buildings.

Alternatively, we will mail or deliver learning materials if necessary. Instruction will take place through the end of May with May 29th being our final day of instruction. Teachers will be using June in order to plan and prepare student supports for the following school year.

Services for Students:

English Language Learners, Gifted and Talented students, Title I students, and Special Education students will all continue to receive services to best meet students' needs. We recognize not all services will be the same as when we are able to have our buildings open, but we continue to find ways to connect with students in order to meet their needs the best that we can.

High School Credits:

Oceanside High School has been developing a plan in which students will continue to participate in their education in order to earn their credits this year. Again, we recognize that every student is in a unique situation, so students unable to participate due to circumstances beyond their control will receive an incomplete for courses they are unable to finish. Our high school is also developing specific plans to support students with incompletes so that their trajectory for high school completion is not negatively affected. More information specific to this plan will be forthcoming for all high school families.

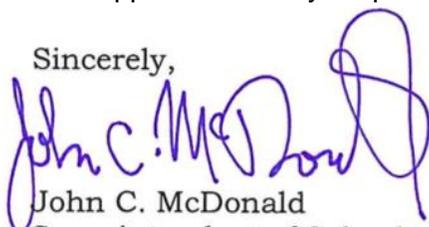
Graduation and Other End of Year Celebrations:

We know how important it is to celebrate life's milestones and that many of our students are feeling a sense of loss knowing that social distancing is preventing all of these meaningful in-person events that culminate both the end of a school year, and for our seniors, the end of their high school career. While we may not be able to completely replicate all of these events, our educators and administrators are working hard to develop creative alternatives. We will continue to communicate these plans as they are developed.

Always remember that we care very much about the impact of our buildings closing on our students, families, and staff. Please know that this district continues to work together to make decisions that are in the best interest of students. We will continue to reach out to share updates and changes as we continue to carve our path through these next several weeks.

Much appreciation for your patience and support during this time.

Sincerely,



John C. McDonald
Superintendent of Schools