

Message from Dr. Xernona Thomas, Interim Superintendent:

March 22, 2020

Dear Clarke County School District Community,

I recognize how challenging and uncertain the past two weeks have been. We are all learning to navigate a temporary new normal and are working to ensure that the needs of our students, families, and staff are met. I am very appreciative of all of the support our staff and community have provided to CCSD. While I understand the frustration that accompanies not having answers to all of your questions, please know that our actions are dictated by guidance from federal, state, and local agencies.

The coronavirus epidemic is a rapidly changing situation, and we are making regular adjustments as we work with local health and government officials. These decisions are not made lightly, but with the best interests of our community in mind. We continue to provide support to students and families in a number of ways, including digital and distance learning, meal service, mental health support, and access to medical services. The [district website](#) is continuously updated with resources and information.

School Closure / Return Date

The Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission unanimously approved an ordinance with a second declaration of a local state of emergency at their Special Called Session on Thursday, March 19, 2020. As a result, Athens-Clarke County is currently under a local emergency declaration of shelter in place until April 7, 2020. Therefore, the district will remain closed until April 7, 2020.

High School Proms

Both high schools originally had prom scheduled for Friday, April 3. In light of the ACC government ordinance currently through April 7, proms are postponed. Our high schools are exploring alternate dates and locations and will keep our students updated on plans.

High School Graduation Ceremonies

The University of Georgia has closed its campus, and as a result, we are unable to use Stegman Coliseum as the site for our graduation ceremonies. We recognize the use of this facility is a tradition for our graduates, and disappointed this is not an option for the Class of 2020. Mr. Derricotte and Dr. Huff are working with our district office to ensure that we can honor our graduates and their accomplishments in an appropriate manner. Our goal is to maintain the date already designated for ceremonies. However, this will be dependent on limitations for large gatherings at that time. Additional graduation communications will be forthcoming.

Meal Service for Students

We are on week number two in the effort to provide meals to our students. A huge “shout out” to our Nutrition and Transportation teams for a truly monumental feat – during our first four days, we served over 17,000 nutritious meals to students. It’s been a work in progress (sometimes we made adjustments by the hour), but we did amazing work! Thank you to CCSD staff and community members who volunteered.

We will continue our current method of operations through next week:

- Drive-thru Locations at Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary/Hilsman Middle from 8:00 a.m. until Noon (Monday—Friday)
- Bus delivery to select neighborhoods ([click here for route information](#))

Volunteer/Support

Many have asked if there is a mechanism to donate money to support students and/or volunteer. If we need to request additional volunteers, we will do so via our [website](#)/social media platforms. The [Athens Area Community Foundation](#) is collecting financial donations on behalf of the district to be used to support students.

Better Together

During times like these, it is easy to lose focus on our priority as an organization. Know we are dedicated to the children of Clarke County. Our teachers and staff are coming up with creative ways to engage with their students, including school spirit days and Facebook live feeds of daily reading circles. We will share fun and innovative ways to make the best out of these days of home learning through our social media platforms – stay tuned!

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