Dear RPS Community,

After day one of the statewide school closure, I want you to know that our staff have risen to the challenge and impressed me at every turn with their dedication and willingness to go the extra mile. Teachers and instructional staff have been learning about new ways to deliver a fully comprehensive educational program, nutrition services staff have been preparing and serving breakfast and lunch to students, coordinators have been processing child care applications, bus drivers are preparing to start delivering meals tomorrow, custodians are cleaning classrooms and common areas and so much more! Literally every school and department is bustling with RPS team members doing everything they can to support students, families and each other during this time. In my six years as Superintendent of Richfield Public Schools, I have never been more proud of our staff.

Here are a few updates based on the latest work taking place:

**Family outreach:** Over the next few days, our outreach workers, social workers and clerical staff will be connecting with each and every one of our families. We want to ensure we have accurate contact information (including email), and we also want to assess the food, technology and educational needs any families may have so that we can help to meet those needs.

**Distance learning:** As a reminder, the packets that were sent home with PK-5 students and the online assignments for students in grades 6-12 are not distance learning. They are materials we provided so that all students can continue to stay engaged in learning during this time. A comprehensive distance learning program is being finalized now and will be ready to fully implement starting April 6 if schools remain closed.

**Meals:** Starting tomorrow (Wednesday, March 18), students can pick-up a grab & go breakfast and/or lunch between 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at any of our school locations [(menu and details here)](https://example.com). We are also starting our meal delivery service tomorrow. School buses will be following normal routes and staff will distribute meals and food from The Sheridan Story at bus stops. Use extra precaution when approaching the bus during meal deliveries. Buses will not be using stop arms or red flashing lights during food delivery routes. Here are the bus schedules:

- Zone 1 - east of Portland
- Zone 2 - 35W to Portland
- Zone 3 - west of 35W

**Child care:** We are partnering with Richfield Fun Club to provide a temporary, free child care service to RPS students enrolled in pre-k (age 4) through grade 5 whose parents are part of the emergency personnel category as identified by the Minnesota Department of Education or who work in Richfield Public Schools and need to be on-site while schools are closed. Parents must complete all enrollment paperwork at least one day prior to their child's start date. Learn more and register online today to start child care tomorrow.
How you can help: We have received many calls and emails from people wanting to help out. This is just another example of what a great place Richfield is to live and work! Right now, we encourage you to collect or donate food to our partners, The Sheridan Story and VEAP. If you have children’s books, consider taking a walk through the neighborhood and dropping them in a little free library. There is also a Facebook group that has been set up by community residents to help neighbors support each other. During this time, there are going to be many opportunities to support one another. Take advantage of them. And if we find a need for donations or volunteers in RPS, you will be among the first to know!

As always, I wish you all the best as we venture into this uncharted territory. Stay safe, follow healthy habits and reach out if you need help. We are all here for each other.

Sincerely,

Superintendent Steven Unowsky