



March 20 Update

This morning the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) published a memo that is now the focus of several social media and news outlet posts. In the memo, MDE explains that “there is no mechanism to earn instruction time during a period of school closure.” This statement is causing many to ask why Lakeshore Public Schools, and other area districts, are providing educational opportunities to our students online or otherwise.

I feel I should share my thoughts with you. As a county leadership group that has been coordinating our efforts for the past several weeks, we understood that remote learning opportunities (RLOs) might not count toward instructional time or days. The pupil accounting manual and school code simply did not have this as a contingency. With this in mind, we continued to move forward with encouraging the process of having our staff create RLOs with the goal of providing opportunities to keep students in a routine and engaged in learning. At the time we made that decision, we had no idea (and to a degree continue to have no idea) how long school would be canceled. I continue to believe that offering these opportunities will support a smooth transition back into school so that we do not lose instructional time getting our students reacclimated once we return.

In terms of whether days will be forgiven or we will have to extend the school year, I have no idea. Our legislators understandably refuse to commit to a decision to waive days until they fully understand the eventual length of the shutdown. Health experts continue to make clear that planned actions could change as the situation evolves and that an April 13 return to school is purely speculative at this time. The inability to forecast the next steps in this crisis continues to lead to a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety, and I wish I had an answer to all of your questions right now. This crisis has disrupted the lives of our students, staff, and community, and we are hoping to provide as much normalcy as we possibly can. We will continue to use the best available information to make decisions and drive our future actions.

I am proud to be part of a school district that continues to lead the way. I am equally proud of our community for their patience and understanding in the face of all this uncertainty.

I will continue to send updates as things evolve. Please take care of yourselves during these uncertain times.