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Dear Mount Laurel School Families,

Your child or children have completed their first full week of virtual learning with their teachers! Certainly, these are unprecedented times for our community, but even more so for you and your children. We have an amazing staff who are dedicated, enthusiastic, and caring when it comes to your children. I think I can speak for all of us when I say your child's teachers and principals are doing all they can to meet these challenges. I remain extremely grateful to lead such an amazing community of educators.

We have been reviewing your school's virtual online learning plans and in some cases, we have made minor revisions which will go into effect next week on Monday, March 30, 2020. If you haven't already been notified, we will be sending you these updates over the weekend. We knew and expected modifications may be needed given the circumstances we all had to respond to so quickly. We all must exercise flexibility during these times and role model this flexibility for our children, I know our staff is doing the same.

In preparation for what will more likely be weeks of online learning, I want to give you some guidance on specific areas we must address as a district at the moment.

The 180 Student Day Requirement

I want each and every day our teachers and your children are putting into their virtual learning plans to count for a regular school day toward the 180-day requirement for students. Please understand that this is not a bygone conclusion that these days will count. To count they must meet strict NJDOE requirements and expectations for student learning during our closure. That is why we are implementing and ensuring live virtual teaching is taking place daily for all our students. It is important that our teaching meets the requirements for a virtual home learning delivery platform and is compensatory of a full day of school. Our plans meet these requirements and that is why must adhere to them.

When will schools reopen?

To dispel any rumors, you should know that schools are closed until such time as Governor Murphy reopens them. Our initial directive from the Burlington County Office of Health was to close until April 20, 2020. However, Governor Murphy's Executive Order 104 issued on March 16, 2020 directed a statewide closure of all schools until such time as the Governor orders them to reopen.

Statewide Testing

The New Jersey Department of Education has cancelled all New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) for the Spring 2020 testing windows. This includes the NJSLA

for Math, ELA, and Science, the ACCESS for ELL students, and the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessment.

Third Marking Period Report Cards

The district has decided to end the third marking period effective Friday, March 13, 2020 for all students in grades K through 8. All report cards will be issued to all parents of students in grades K through 8, on schedule on Tuesday, April 21, 2020.

Grading on the Virtual Platform

We are implementing a non-grading policy in PowerSchool for all students. Teachers will be recording work completed in PowerSchool without issuing a grade. Teachers will continue to give corrective feedback to students to guide their learning. Our goal is to help students maintain and make progress during this time and ensure their participation.

Virtual Online Learning Guidelines

Please know that teaching and learning in this virtual platform is new to us all, including our teachers. We are asking parents to ensure your children adhere to some simple etiquettes while learning online. Students should not be recording their classes with their phones and our classroom lessons should remain private and not shared with others outside the classroom. All are teachers are recording their lessons and they will be available for future access by students. We respect and honor the privacy of our children's classroom learning environment in school and we carry these same values over to our virtual classrooms as well.

I want all of you to know we are extremely grateful with all your efforts and cooperation with our staff and teachers! We couldn't be doing what we are doing without such wonderful parent partners!

Please be well and stay healthy during these times!

Sincerely,

George J. Rafferty, Ed. D.

Superintendent of Schools