MSBA Distance Learning Period Update

March 29, 2020

The Minnesota Distance Learning Period begins on Monday, March 30, and ends on May 5. May 1 and May 4 are staff planning days; students return to schools on May 5. School districts and charter schools are required to post their distance learning plans on their websites by Friday, March 27.

The Minnesota Department of Education updated the following documents in the lead-up to Distance Learning (links to all MDE documents are available on MSBA homepage):

- Distance Learning and Teaching Implementation Guide (updated March 27)
- School Closure Guidance for Public School Districts and Charter Schools (updated March 27)

MSBA recently updated or circulated the following documents:

- Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and School Employees (updated March 25)
- School Board Meeting Guide (updated March 25)
- Sample Letter of Agreement Providing Additional Compensation for Certain Essential School Employees (emailed March 27)
- Essential Services Letter (for travel to and from work) (emailed March 27)

Childcare Responsibilities

School districts and charter schools continue to be required to provide care for district-enrolled children (age 12 and under) of Tier 1 workers and are encouraged to provide childcare for children of Tier 2 workers. (Executive Order [EO] 20-20; MDE, Care for Children of Families Working in Critical Sectors, March 25)

Staff and Distance Learning Period

1. School districts and schools must allow for remote work or telework to the extent possible, per applicable labor agreements (EO 20-19).

2. School districts must utilize available staff who are available to work consistent with applicable labor agreements (EO 20-19). MDE states, “Because districts and charters will be receiving full funding for providing distance learning, it is expected that all staff, including non-salaried, hourly staff, will earn pay and benefits as planned in the school budget and bargaining agreements.”

   a. Management has authority to assign staff to necessary tasks as arise during the pandemic and to satisfy the federal and state requirements regarding instruction, health, and safety

   b. See MDE, Q-and-A on School Closure, “What type of work should paraprofessionals do during this time” (Updated March 24)
c. Suggestion: Staff rotation on responsibilities for childcare, cleaning, and food service can help sustain staff morale.

3. Emergency Management/Crisis Management: School districts and charter schools are encouraged to ensure that on-site staffing is sufficient for emergency/crisis management purposes.

Playgrounds and Other Outside Facilities

School districts may choose to limit or prohibit access to outside equipment and facilities.

Please *ask MSBA* if questions arise.