

Update 03/22/20

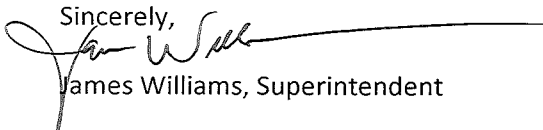
Stakeholders:

1. After consideration of the fact that the virus is continuing to spread and in light of there being a positive case confirmed in Vernon Parish, and in light of more positives to be expected, I have decided to make the following changes to plans for schools and the central office.
 - a. All schools and offices remain closed and on "shutdown" until further notice.
 - b. Only schools that are feeding sites will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Thursday. At these schools, only essential people to the feeding program will be asked to come to that school site. This includes the Principal, food service technicians, and cafeteria managers. I will ask that each Principal set up a time during the week for a custodial team to come in and continue to clean and disinfect and sanitize the buildings and grounds. We will continue the feeding program for as long as we can, but may have to suspend that in the future. We ask that these feeding sites only prepare the "grab and go" lunches, then set them to out to be picked up. I expect no contact between the workers and the general public.
 - c. Any information that the parents and the general public needs to discuss can be done through phone calls to the schools, during those modified hours and/or emails to the Principals.
 - d. I ask that all other employees, not involved in the feeding program, to stay home and try to keep up with their work from home until further notice
2. Principals will receive guidance and information from our Finance Department on procedures to follow for payroll purposes and business transactions so we can continue to pay our bills and ensure that everyone continues to get paid on time. Again, I ask that all travel be suspended and all deliveries be cancelled.
3. I ask that Board Members review again the attached "Declaration of Public Emergency" Resolution and be prepared for a special meeting of the Board to approve this Resolution. This will allow the Superintendent of each school district regulatory power to conduct business as needed in this time of emergency without having to wait for Board action during a regular scheduled meeting. We will be contacting each of you to set up a time for a special meeting.
4. Again, I ask that every school employee have 2 plans. One for if we return in April and one if we do not.

These are very trying times for each of us. My main priority during all of this is the safety of our students, our employees, and this entire community. We ask that everyone be patient as we are trying to do the best we can to allow what is best for our students and what is best for our schools. Please support and cooperate with all school officials during this time. Please continue following the safety guidelines on a consistent basis as we all will work together to get through this. I believe we will come out of this stronger in the end. I wish everyone safety and well-being during this time. I will also continue to update you as I work daily on this situation. Thanks for all you do.

***After this memo was written, Governor Edwards issued a "Stay at Home Order". We are waiting to see if this affects our school feeding program. Also, we will hold a "special-called" board meeting Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. We are checking on the possibility of a conference call meeting, but as of now, the notification (24 hour) will show the meeting to take place at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday.**

Sincerely,



James Williams, Superintendent

VERNON PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

DECLARATION OF PUBLIC EMERGENCY

COVID-19

WHEREAS, on December 31, 2019, officials in China alerted the World Health Organization (“WHO”) to several cases of an unknown respiratory illness primarily concentrated in the City of Wuhan, Hubei Province; and

WHEREAS, after further investigating the illness and ruling out the recurrence of other previously known viruses, officials, on January 7, 2020, announced the discovery of a new virus belonging to the coronavirus family of viruses (“COVID-19”); and

WHEREAS, over the following weeks, the Chinese government began to report additional cases of the virus, evidencing a propensity of the virus to spread throughout China and beyond; and

WHEREAS, by January 30, 2020, approximately eighteen countries, outside of China, were reporting cases of the virus, causing the WHO to declare the virus a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern;” and

WHEREAS, over the following weeks, the virus continued to spread to nations around the globe, infecting thousands of individuals; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the WHO declared the coronavirus outbreak a “Global Pandemic;” and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the Governor of the State of Louisiana declared a “Public Health Emergency” over the coronavirus outbreak; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States of America declared a national emergency due to the coronavirus outbreak; and

WHEREAS, in an attempt to combat the spread of the virus, the Governor, on March 13, 2020, ordered the closure of all public elementary and secondary schools in Louisiana, beginning on March 16, 2020 and ending on April 13, 2020; and

WHEREAS, many children depend on the services of the Vernon Parish School Board

for essential services such as the provision of healthy meals; and

WHEREAS, while the cancellation of school will hopefully serve to combat the spread of the virus, such cancellation may put children at risk of not receiving enough healthy meals during the prolonged closure; and

WHEREAS, the spread of the virus and its impact on the every'day lives of the School Board's students, faculty, staff, and their family members requires the School Board to take unprecedented steps to combat the spread of the virus and to serve the children of Vernon Parish; and

WHEREAS, the sudden closure of all schools until April 13, 2020 or later has also caused confusion and concern to employees of the school district about their ability to continue to be able to support their families through receipt of compensation from the School Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, the above recitals considered, the School Board desires to utilize its assets in the fight against the coronavirus, as more fully set forth below.

AND NOW, CONSIDERING THE FOREGOING, THE SCHOOL BOARD HEREBY DECLARES AS FOLLOWS:

BE IT DECLARED, that the Vernon Parish School Board hereby declares a public emergency due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus.

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED that, notwithstanding any policy or rule to the contrary, the School Board hereby confers emergency powers upon its Superintendent of Schools, for purposes of leading the School Board's response to the outbreak. Such emergency powers include, at the sole discretion of the Superintendent:

- (1) The authority to enter into any agreement or contract, without any further Board approval, for the purchase of materials, equipment, supplies, or services for sanitation, cleaning, technology, and other Covid-19 related services and supplies on behalf of School Board.
- (2) The authority to supply and arrange for the delivery of meals to all children of the parish, eighteen (18) years of age or younger, at no costs to the child or his/her family.
- (3) The authority to continue to pay school employees their regular compensation during the period schools are closed.
- (4) The authority to adjust curriculum, work schedules, compensation, and staff assignments without any further Board approval.

- (5) The authority to adjust the school calendar.
- (6) The authority to apply to BESE, LDOE, and/or USDOE, or any other governmental body for waivers of regulations or requirements, the compliance of which is impacted by COVID-19.
- (7) The authority to apply for waivers, grants, reimbursements, aid, and other Covid- 19 related matters on behalf of the School Board.
- (8) The authority to provide non-mandatory, supplemental educational resources to students.
- (9) The authority to take any other action reasonably necessary to implement the above directives.

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED that the Superintendent is required to report, in writing and at reasonable intervals, to the School Board as to the amount of expenditures made pursuant to this Declaration, as well as, the actions taken by the Superintendent pursuant to this Declaration.

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED that, in accordance with the Governor's declaration, any bidding requirements of the Louisiana Public Bid Law (La. R.S. 38:2212 et seq.) applicable to any purchases related to the School Board's response to the coronavirus outbreak are hereby suspended.

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED that this Declaration shall remain in effect until withdrawn by the School Board.

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED that notice of the provisions contained herein shall be published in the official journal of the Vernon Parish School Board within ten (10) days hereof.

THIS DECLARATION is adopted by the Vernon Parish School Board, at a meeting held on the 2nd day of April 2020 in Leesville, Louisiana.

James Williams, Superintendent
Vernon Parish School Board
Shad Stewart, Board President
Vernon Parish School Board