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Superintendent Statement on Governor's Order to Extend Closure of Schools
Ann Arbor Public Schools
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Today, the Governor has issued an Executive Order directing the extension of school closure for Michigan schools through the end of the school year. We understand that we all will have many questions and we are committed to work together to answer these questions as we move forward together.

We recognize the complexities the Governor has faced in making this very serious decision to extend school closure, and we are grateful that she has been guided by experts in public health and epidemiology in making the difficult decision to prioritize the health and safety of Michigan students and families, our staff and all in our communities. During this process, Governor Whitmer has also engaged with PK12 educators and leaders to thoughtfully collaborate regarding the many concerns of students and staff, parents and community; this is evidenced in the depth and detail of the 17-page Executive Order released today.

In the Ann Arbor Public Schools, we recognize the important role and responsibility we have in serving during this COVID-19 crisis: to prioritize student, staff, and community health and safety, to connect with and continue to serve our students in forward learning and critical supports, and we also take very seriously our overarching responsibility to help flatten the curve in mitigating community spread of the COVID-19 virus.

We have been busy over previous weeks as our talented, committed teachers, staff, school and district leaders have been preparing, reaching out to connect and engage with students to share learning opportunities, and in the days following this spring break week, we will transition to a more significant distance learning education model for our students in the AAPS.

Our teachers will be prepared to launch forward instruction, albeit with some adaptations from our brick and mortar programming. Families can expect scheduled and consistent lessons, materials and assignments to support students in making progress in the curricula in every subject area, at every grade level. We will share more specific details about the learning expectations for students following spring break.

We are mindful of our significant number of students and families who may struggle to fully engage in an online setting for learning, and we have and will continue to reach out directly to provide additional support. We recognize that a significant portion of our AAPS students and families may experience an extra challenge in participating in distance learning – whether as a result of special needs, connectivity issues, second language, impact of poverty, illness, mental health or other life or learning realities - and we are committed to work hard to support our

students and families in whatever ways are needed to ensure physical health and safety, connection and learning needs are met as we move forward.

In addition, we understand that our students and families have widely varying needs, abilities, and time-constraints, particularly during this crisis and associated social distance requirements, and a 'one size fits all' approach to distance learning in the AAPS will not serve our families well.

As a result, our teachers and school teams will be working, as they do every day, with students and parents to ensure we support a balanced approach to distance learning while also attending to other needed supports such as particular learning, social emotional and mental health needs.

We recognize that catching up academically from this COVID closure experience will not occur only during the upcoming 10 weeks following spring break; we understand that ensuring our students are progressing well will prove an ongoing process and challenge for all students and schools across the state and the country, and we are planning now to meet this challenge in the AAPS.

In addition to a foundation of regular engagement and content learning with the classroom teacher, we are also exploring a menu of optional learning opportunities and enhancements from which our students and families may wish to take advantage in late spring and summer. We will share more about these learning enhancements beginning after spring break.

Times of crisis offer opportunities to deepen our work around our most fundamental priorities. Though the details of our teaching and learning work may look very different now, our critical mission in the Ann Arbor Public Schools remains ever the same: Every Child. Every Day. We will continue to carry out our critical work to prioritize student and family health, food security and safety, to ensure connection and productive forward learning, and to extend partnership and outreach to support all our students, families, and the Ann Arbor community.