

Today April 14, 2020, Governor Tate Reeves announced that all K-12 public schools in the state of Mississippi would remain closed for in-person instruction for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year. This is a real loss for teachers who miss their students, students who miss their teachers, and for our graduating seniors. However, it is also the wisest decision, given what we know about COVID-19 and how it is affecting our state. CMSD fully supports this decision, for the safety and health of our students and staff are of the utmost importance to us.

Our schools and classrooms may be closed but our hearts and love for the community of Clarksdale, MS remains open.

Despite this unprecedented and often scary time, CMSD has still been a shining light. Hundreds of meals have been prepared and delivered, daily lessons have been taught virtually through Google Classroom and Google Meets, phone calls, and hundreds of emails have occurred. Extra hours were put in not only by our staff but by our students and parent body as well. These small gestures of sacrifice, dedication, compassion, and love all show that the entire community stands by our district motto: *The children of CMSD are "OUR" top priority.*

Even though the classroom doors are closed, opportunities for school meals, distance learning, and other essential functions will remain open to students in the community for the rest of this school year.

With that in mind, we would like to thank the food service and nutrition staff who prepare meals for students, the bus drivers who delivered meals during our Wildcats on Wheels outreach efforts, the teachers and paraprofessionals who are learning new ways to engage and educate their students, our nurses, counselors, and district social worker and behavioral specialist who all provide critical support and therapy for children, the custodians who sanitize and disinfect our buildings, and our school leaders who have had to make high-stake decisions that will ultimately affect everyone in their buildings. For this, we appreciate you every day in every way.

As a nation we are now realizing that public schools are more than a place and teachers do so much more than just teach. For many students' school serves as a safe haven from the worries and troubles of the outside world. We understand that this adds to the current COVID-19 challenges but TOGETHER we will get through this as we continue to keep what's truly important at the forefront; the safety and wellbeing of all our students and staff.

School, as we know it in actual classrooms, may be coming to an end for this school year but we know that the tools and insight gained from this experience will only enhance our effectiveness and commitment to the education of our students for years to come.

We will have more updates later regarding grading and completion of assignments.

