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Dear JPS Community,

Today, Governor Tate Reeves announced his decision to close schools throughout the state through April 17, 2020, to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of our communities. In accordance with today's announcement, Jackson Public Schools will be closed through April 17th, at a minimum, and will continue efforts to provide supports to scholars and families, and to ensure that learning continues. Given the rapidly changing nature of this crisis, our JPS Board of Trustees voted Tuesday, March 17, 2020, to close schools indefinitely and allowed district administration the flexibility to extend school closure plans without having to return to the Board with each change.

Governor Reeves also declared that districts will continue to receive our state funding to operate, and that employees will be paid during this time of school closure. As we've noted previously, our district has identified "essential" staff members who will be required to work during the closure, even if that work is done remotely or in some other altered manner.

JPS educators are working collaboratively to develop meaningful and reasonable learning opportunities for all of our scholars, even with the challenges of inequitable access to technology (especially with devices and technology). At this time, we are developing learning materials that are paper-based, online, shared via our Instructional Television Channels (Comcast Channels 18 & 19), and through other modes of delivery. As districts across the state evolve their instructional delivery and materials, we appreciate the Mississippi State Board of Education for voting today to suspend state testing requirements. This action both acknowledges the challenges of our current health crisis and responds to mounting requests for such relief for scholars and schools. The Governor and State Board of Education have also waived the requirement of 180 days in the school calendar, which means that we will not have to make up any closure days related to COVID-19.

With this new development and extended closure, our district team will continue planning and developing more robust instructional materials and continue offering supplemental breakfast and lunch programs to support our scholars. Please watch for more information related to our COVID-19 response on our website (www.jackson.k12.ms.us) and social media platforms such as [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). You'll find health resources, supports for learning at home, news and updates, and the answers to your Frequently Asked Questions.

Thank you for your continued support and patience as we move through this challenging time.

Be well.

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JACKSON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT