Dear Holyoke Public Schools Community,

In collaboration with state and local officials, Holyoke Public Schools has made the difficult decision to close for two weeks beginning Monday, March 16, due to Coronavirus (COVID-19) concerns. Pending new information regarding the health and safety of students and our community, the tentative plan is to reopen schools on Monday, March 30. All school-related activities and events are canceled during the closure.

As much as possible, students, families, and staff are encouraged to remain at home and follow the guidelines issued by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Public health authorities have advised that social distancing is the best way to slow the spread of infection and prevent the challenges of providing care for many people being infected at once. However, Students will be able to pick up breakfast and lunch at the front doors of Donahue, Holyoke High School - North, Kelly, Lawrence, and Sullivan Schools from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Educators will be in touch with families throughout the closure period. You are also welcome to contact your child’s teachers or principal around specific needs for your child or for tips to engage in learning. Student engagement in learning and having a sense of routine during the school closure is important. Accordingly, educators have provided students with materials today to take home and activities will be available online. This work is optional and intended to support active and independent learning. In order to ensure equal access to education for all students, it is important that none of the work distributed counts towards grades, attendance or “buying back” absences.

If you wish to pick up your child’s medication, nurses are available on Monday, March 16 during school hours; if you cannot pick up the medication during this time, contact your nurse to make other arrangements. Students are NOT allowed to pick up their own medication.

The last day of the school year will be Tues., June 23, which is our previously scheduled 185th day.

We realize this decision has a significant impact and far-reaching ramifications for our community and we understand the disappointment, frustration and uncertainty that is created. However, we believe these steps are necessary given the current realities. The health and safety of our students, families, staff and entire Holyoke Community is the primary driver of all of our decisions.

We will continue providing regular updates throughout the closure via email and on our HPS Health and Wellness page. Thanks for your support and understanding.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stephen Zrike, Jr.