SPECIAL ISSUE

THE BRIGHT SIDE

Lansing School District
PULLING TOGETHER

Although Lansing’s schools have closed in an effort to help keep local students and their families safe and healthy, we are still offering an array of important services to support our community.

In this special issue of The Bright Side, we will share important resources for staying strong in the weeks ahead.

After all, when it comes to moving through times of hardship and crisis, we can achieve the most when we work together.
Accessing Meals During the COVID-19 School Closure

To make sure all Lansing families have the same access to food while schools are closed as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Lansing School District has launched a School Closure Food Service Program.

Lansing parents or students can stop by one of the over 20 sites set up by the Lansing School District and SodexoMAGIC (see flyer on the following page) to pick up lunch for the day and breakfast for the next day.

Multiple days of meals can be picked up at once, including food for the weekends.

“At a time when we are concerned about the health and safety of our entire community, we can’t afford to ignore the basics,” said Lansing School District interim superintendent Sam Sinicropi. “A well-balanced diet is essential for remaining disease-free and for healing quickly should illness strike.”

Parents and children 18 and under can walk up, bike up or drive to a curbside pick-up location to obtain needed meals.

“There’s no restriction on who can eat the meals we’re providing,” Sinicropi said.

“Parents and other non-school-aged family members are welcome to the meals we’re providing, as well.”

Children don’t have to accompany parents when picking up the food.

“This is a challenging time for all of us,” Sinicropi said. “We hope that by making these meals available with a minimum of fuss and hassle, we can make at least one moment of the day a little less challenging for Lansing families.”

Meals will be provided through April 3, 2020.

Pick up locations and times may be modified. Please visit www.lansingschools.net/food for the latest information.
The Coronavirus: How to Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones

With the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic gripping the world, one of the first thoughts anyone should have is, “How can I protect myself and those around me?”

It’s an important question, and it’s information everyone needs as we collectively work to slow the spread of this virus.

Unfortunately, there is not yet a vaccine to prevent COVID-19. However, there are some simple steps you can take to reduce your chance of exposure.

Much like the common cold, COVID-19 is mainly spread from person to person. When an infected person coughs or sneezes, tiny respiratory droplets containing the virus can land on nearby people or surfaces. Through just breathing or touching one’s face, those tiny droplets can then make their way into the respiratory systems of those who have shared a space with an infected person.

But remember, the good news is there are some simple steps you can take to avoid being exposed to the virus.

Most obviously, avoid close contact with others. The virus is spread mainly from people who are in close contact with one another (within about six feet). Taking steps to avoid crowded spaces and doing your best to maintain six feet of distance from others will lower your risk of exposure.

Beyond that, the best thing to do is to practice the kind of good hygiene habits that should already be at the forefront of your mind during cold and flu season.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

In summary, keep your distance when you can and wash your hands often. Following these simple guidelines is your best defense in avoiding COVID-19.
Free or Discounted Internet Available for Lansing Families

To ensure area residents can connect with news and resources during the COVID-19 crisis, Comcast and AT&T have announced discounted internet packages for low-income families.

“In today’s world, internet access is of tremendous importance,” said Lansing School District’s interim superintendent Sam Sinicropi. “Not only are essential U.S. and global updates available at the push of a finger, but students and adults alike can benefit from online programs and cultural opportunities that help learning continue even when the schools are closed.”

From New York City’s Metropolitan Opera, which is streaming its performances each night through digital services, to major museums—like the Louvre and the Guggenheim—that offer online access to their collections, it’s difficult to overstate the opportunities available through the internet.

“These school closures don’t have to be a time of learning loss,” Sinicropi said. “Rather, we are encouraging families to grow in ways they hadn’t thought of before, by getting online and sharing innovative experiences.”

Comcast is offering a free trial for its Internet Essentials package, while AT&T’s Access program is being offered to those who qualify for $10 a month.

To learn more or to sign up, visit:

AT&T: https://www.att.com/shop/internet/access/
Comcast: https://www.internetessentials.com/
While schools are closed due to COVID-19, the Lansing School District has compiled a list of complimentary educational and online learning resources for parents and students.

Families can visit [http://www.lansingschools.net/parents/learning-at-home/](http://www.lansingschools.net/parents/learning-at-home/) to begin using the information.

“These resources are a supplemental means of continuing to sharpen the skill sets of our students relevant to Michigan Department of Education Common Core Standards,” said Lansing School District deputy superintendent Dr. Delsa Chapman.

A customized resource specific to Lansing School District curriculum will be available on Monday, March 23, 2020.

“The resource will include a recommended daily schedule of activities with associated hyperlinks,” Chapman said. “We are encouraging all families to stay connected with your child’s teacher(s) in the same manner as you have throughout this school year.”

If a parent has difficulty connecting with a teacher, Let’s Talk offers a great way to speed up the process.

“The Lansing School District is committed to supporting the continued education of your child(ren) during this unprecedented time,” Chapman said. “Be safe and be encouraged.”
While online resources are great for students and families, low-tech activities also will promote creativity and family fun! As a family, try to commit to sharing four activities together every day, you may find new ways to enjoy this unexpected time at home.

Ingham ISD has provided these important tips to remember:

- Maintain a consistent routine (bedtime, get dressed every day, monitor/limit screen time).
- Check in devices before bedtime and charge them in a common area.
- Talk about what is happening with your children in age-appropriate ways.
- Roleplay with your child.
- Eat meals together without personal devices.
- Be sure to get outside and stay active.
- Keep in mind that learning can happen anywhere!

A lengthy list of ideas for low-tech math, literacy, science/STEM, social studies and other activities has been prepared for Lansing families by Ingham ISD. Download the full list at https://www.inghamisd.org/thelatest/public-information-and-reports/corona-virus-information/learning-resources/ and check off new items every day!
Even if you do follow the best practices to avoid COVID-19, there is still a chance you might contract the virus.

If you do think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms such as a cough or difficulty breathing, follow the guidelines below.

• The good news is most who get COVID-19 will recover just fine on their own at home. If you're sick, do not leave your home, except to get medical care.
• Avoid public areas and public transportation. You need to do your best to avoid spreading the disease to others. Even if your immune system is handling it well, that doesn’t mean that will be the case for those around you.
• Do your very best to avoid other people in your home. As much as possible, stay in a specific “sick room” away from other people in the house and use a separate bathroom, if available.
• Wear a mask. If you believe you are sick, you should wear a mask before entering a health care provider’s office.
• Cover your coughs and sneezes. Just like with the common cold, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and then wash your hands immediately afterward, if possible.
• Wash your hands often. Soap and water for 20 seconds is the best option. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
• Avoid sharing personal household items. Do not shares dishes, glasses, eating utensils, towels or bedding with other people in your home. After using any of these sorts of items, be sure to wash them thoroughly.
• Clean all “high touch” surfaces every day. Clean
all the high-touch surface area in your designated sick area and let others do the same for the areas of the house you are avoiding. High-touch surfaces include countertops, doorknobs, remotes, toilets, keyboards, tablets, bedside tables and phones. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work.

- Stay in touch with your health care provider but be sure to CALL FIRST before leaving the house. If you think you’re sick, you should call your doctor and let them know. However, don’t rush to leave the house just yet. It’s quite possible to contract coronavirus and recover without medical intervention. Before seeking care, your doctor or emergency room will want to assess your condition over the phone. They will tell you if they think it’s necessary for you to come in and they will take the necessary precautions for others before you arrive.
  
- If you do contract COVID-19 and you have been instructed to isolate yourself at home, you can discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:
  
  - If you will not have test to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after these three things have happened:
    - You have had no fever for at least 72 hours AND
    - Other symptoms have improved AND
    - At least seven days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.
  
  - If you will be tested to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after these three things have happened:
    - You no longer have a fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers AND
    - Other symptoms have improved AND
    - You have received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart.
How Will Standardized Testing Be Handled This Year?

Each spring, student learning is assessed via a number of important standardized tests. In 2020, of course, COVID-19 is putting all these assessments on hold.

In Michigan

State-administered tests like the M-STEP, MI-Access, the SAT, PSAT, WorkKeys, and WIDA all are on hold.

The Michigan Department of Education (“MDE”) is working with its vendors to plan for “a variety of scenarios.” They are seeking flexibility in test administration, preparation, and results for this school year.

The U.S. Department of Education also is involved to ensure fair and responsible handling of important test administration.

College Entrance Exams

The SAT and ACT examinations are currently on hold, as well. What this means for the admissions process is still to be determined.

Here’s what the College Board, which administers the SAT exam, is saying:

“College Board will provide future additional SAT testing opportunities for students as soon as possible in place of canceled administrations. We’ll be as flexible as possible to give students the best chance to show their skills and stay on the path to college.

“We have not yet canceled the June 6, 2020 SAT and SAT Subject Test administration and will continue to assess its status, with the health and safety of students and educators as our top priority. We are also exploring the possibility of adding an international SAT administration later this school year.”

According to the ACT:

“The safety of students and test center staff is ACT’s top priority. ACT has rescheduled its April 4 national test date to June 13 across the U.S. in response to concerns about the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). All students registered for the April 4 test date will receive an email from ACT in the next few days informing them of the postponement and instructions for free rescheduling to June 13 or a future national test date.”

The Lansing School District recommends high school juniors affected by the delayed assessments use the extra time they have available for additional study and preparation.
Don’t Miss Out on those Athletic and Extracurricular Activities

When your student is home, it can often be tempting to let them sleep late, hang out with friends, or be a little lazy.

However, it’s also a great time to keep them engaged in the activities they most enjoy! The weather is nice enough for spring sports to be part of their days—even if they only step out for a quick walk or run, it’s still an improvement over the sofa.

Even better, outdoor activities also can help your student fight an illness should one strike. Becoming healthy and fit is an asset to be boosted and treasured during a time of illness or physical challenge.

If the performing arts are more your student’s speed, consider building some practice time into the daily routine. You also can engage their thirst for performance through online programs which allow virtual access to museums, performances, and more.

Perhaps your student is an extrovert for whom quarantine and isolation are difficult. In these situations, don’t be afraid to share your telephone. If the student is a member of a club or community service group, encourage him or her to do some organizational planning with a co-member, or consider a service project to support the community during this time of crisis and change.

Here in the Lansing School District, we value each and every student as a whole person—not just as an academic learner.

So when it comes to engaging your students interests and hobbies, we’re on your side.