

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OKALOOSA COUNTY

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
MARCUS D. CHAMBERS

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MEDIA RELEASE
SATURDAY, MARCH 17, 2020
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COVID-19 UPDATE OKALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT MARCH 17, 2020 6:00 P.M.

Following a statewide conference with the Department of Education and other state officials today, the Okaloosa County School District has been notified that *school sites will remain closed through April 15*. During this statewide extension of school closures, we will continue to work closely with all agencies to ensure that the health and safety of our students remains our highest priority.

Education for students will resume.

In the past two weeks, we've been preparing for the possibility of an extended school closing by developing an educational continuity plan for students to continue their education from home. It will consist of age-appropriate *online curriculum* and will have dedicated pathways for teachers and students to communicate. Superintendent Marcus Chambers believes that Okaloosa's employees and students are both up to the challenge ahead of them. "Okaloosa teachers, school staffs and students are the Best in Florida, and I have no doubt that we all will rise to the challenge in front of us." Students will remain connected to the teachers they've had all year.

Like Okaloosa, districts throughout Florida will work through March 27th to complete their plans, train teachers and staff on the new delivery model, provide computers to students who may need them, and to ensure internet access for all students. According to Chambers, the district will put out a survey by Friday, March 20th to help identify which students will need equipment and other types of support in order to continue their education online. In addition to the survey, which may be difficult for the targeted families to access, the district will do a callout asking parents to notify them by phone of their needs. Said Chambers, "We'll do what it takes to make sure that all students have the same opportunity to be successful."

Education for our students in this new platform will begin on March 30. More information to parents will follow.

Additional information includes the following:

- All school activities and events are cancelled until further notice.
- All statewide testing for the school year has been cancelled.
- We have not received final guidance on Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or AICE testing at this time. These tests are critically important for students who are working to earn college credit through examination. We will monitor this closely and provide families with information as it is made available.

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REMINDER – FOOD SERVICE BEGINS WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

We will begin feeding students using Grab and Go beginning tomorrow, March 18, at the ten sites listed below and will notify parents when additional sites are added next week. **We are also exploring using school buses to deliver meals to certain areas of the county.**

LOCATIONS

BAKER - Baker School

LAUREL HILL - Laurel Hill School

CRESTVIEW - Northwood Elementary, Riverside Elementary

NICEVILLE/VALP - Lewis School, Plew Elementary

DESTIN - Destin Elementary

FORT WALTON BEACH - Wright Elementary, Mary Esther Elementary, Edwins Elementary

MEAL PICKUP TIMES

Weekdays from 7:30 a.m. – 11:30a.m. beginning Wednesday, March 18

OTHER INFORMATION

State food service guidelines require the student to be present in order for meals to be distributed.

When a parent arrives at a meal site, they will be able to receive up to two meals for the day for each student they bring to the site (breakfast and lunch).

Students may pick up meals for themselves without a parent present.

The District will notify parents if meal sites are added the week of March 23rd.