



Akron Central School District

In Pursuit of Excellence

*Patrick D. McCabe
Superintendent of Schools*

May 15, 2020

Dear Families of the Akron Central School District:

I hope that this update finds you and your family members well. In my last letter, I spoke about what it means to be Akron Strong. Since that time, the generosity of both staff and community members continues to soar! The outpouring of support to our students and acts of kindness we have experienced has been incredible. We are very fortunate to live and work in a community of such great strength, collaboration, and concern. Our students are at the center of all that we do and despite the hardships of our current situation, I believe that through this, they are learning valuable, life-long lessons on what it means to be a good person and a conscientious citizen.

The intent of this message is to give you some important information updates on district related issues. New information on grade level and building-based topics such as the schedule for picking up student possessions and the delivery of learning materials has been provided by our principals and is [posted on the website](#).

Continuity of Instruction

While the building may be closed, the teaching and learning process continues. Our teachers are working diligently to provide meaningful distance learning opportunities that will help your children earn course credit and be prepared for the next school year. However, without your efforts and the commitment of the students themselves, these endeavors would be in vain. Thus, students are expected to continue to engage in all learning until the end of the school year. On behalf of our entire staff, thank you for your partnership and support of your child's education. This continues to be a true team effort!

Last Day of Distance Learning

Determining the final day of distance learning has been a topic of concern for all parties involved. According to Executive Order 202.14, school districts are required to provide continuity of instruction, food distribution, and childcare for essential workers on every weekday during New York on Pause. For this reason, we were required to forgo all vacation days for students and staff. Therefore, Friday, May 22nd must also be retrieved as an instructional day. However, on Monday, May 25th we will not be in session so that we may recognize Memorial Day, our national holiday for remembering the sacrifices of our war heroes and their families.

These additional days for learning have resulted in a change to the end of the academic year for students. The final day of instruction through distance learning for all students, UPK through grade 12, is now Friday, June 12, 2020. Like many things associated with the pandemic, we recognize that this change will have an effect on families. We appreciate your understanding.

Meal Distribution

The District has chosen to extend meal distribution and childcare for essential workers until Friday, June 26th. Distribution times will remain M, W, F from 3:00-6:00 p.m. All school-age children are eligible to receive breakfast and lunch at no cost. As of today, the district has sent home 86,000 meals! We are grateful to all of our food service workers for this amazing accomplishment. In addition, we are thankful to FeedMore WNY and the many staff members that have assisted with the food pantry program.

School Budget and Board of Education Voting

In accordance with Executive Order 202.26, school districts across New York State will hold the annual school budget and board member election vote by absentee ballot only. Absentee ballots will be mailed to district residents on or about May 23, 2020. A postage paid return envelope will be provided. All ballots must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9, 2020.

Advocating for Akron

As you know, the coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating impact on our state's economy. Recent estimates suggest that the New York State budget deficit is in the \$10-15 billion range. Further adding to this problem is that the sales tax revenue that schools depend on is also projected to decline sharply as result of the partial economic shut down. With aid to schools comprising 27% of the State budget, there is significant concern that funding to schools will be reduced during the upcoming school year.

Akron relies on State aid for 49% of its total revenue. In the absence of substantial support from the federal government, cuts in State funding have the potential to be damaging to our student programming.

You have all done your part to support our kids and our district. However, I am asking you to consider doing just a little bit more - now is a time for your voice to be heard. I have written to Senators Kristen Gillibrand and Charles Schumer, asking them to support the Federal assistance to New York State. If you would like to take action, please click on the links provided below to contact our elected leaders.

[Senator Gillibrand Email](#)

[Senator Schumer Email](#)

Maintaining Fiscal Responsibility

Despite the fact that operating costs continue to rise, our state aid for the 2020-2021 school year was capped at last year's level. It is our responsibility to use your tax dollars wisely while positioning ACS for long-term fiscal and programmatic stability. Thus, this year's operating budget contains numerous cost saving measures and is projected to be approximately 1.49 million dollars lower than last year. At the same time, the tax levy will be below the State mandated 2% tax cap. In part, this reduction was achieved through the development of a strong funding plan for our voter approved capital project that utilizes existing reserves and building aid to minimize borrowing costs for the District. Other savings were identified through a detailed budget development process. Specifically, analysis of student enrollment resulted in the opportunity for staff reductions through retirement. Requests to expand staffing levels were eliminated from consideration in order to keep spending down. Additional "belt tightening" efforts resulted in reductions in spending on supplies, equipment and contractual items. In short, the district has worked aggressively to control costs while still providing our students with an exemplary educational program.

In closing, I want to thank you again for your support. We are sincerely giving every effort that we can to do what is in the best interest of your children while fulfilling the mission of the District and meeting the expectations of our wonderful community.

On behalf of everyone here at ACS, we hope that you and every member of our community stays safe and well.

Sincerely,

Patrick D. McCabe
Superintendent of Schools