



March 16, 2020

Dear Portland Public Schools Families,

I am writing to give you more specifics on how we plan to distribute school meals, learning materials and tech devices to support our transition to remote learning. The distribution will begin this week in ways that use social distancing as much as possible to keep everyone safe during this COVID-19 outbreak.

School Meals

On Tuesday, March 17th, to assist students with food needs prior to the launch of our meal program on Wednesday, Full Plates Full Potential, a PPS partner, is coordinating a rapid response through their network of restaurant professionals in greater Portland. The FEED KIDS Maine team will provide lunch bags to students from 10am-12 noon on Tuesday at the following schools:

- Riverton Elementary School
- Lyman Moore Middle School
- Deering High School
- King Middle School
- East End Community School

Any PPS families can pick up the lunch bags, even if their child doesn't attend these schools.

Beginning Wednesday, March 18th, the Portland Public Schools will provide school meals for children up to age 18. The school meals program is governed by federal rules, which state that **children must be present in order for meals to be provided**. Meals will include both breakfast and lunch and can be picked up together anytime between 10am and 12 noon, Monday – Friday, from the bus loop at each participating school. You can drive up. If you do, please stay in your car and meals will be provided based on the number of children in the car. Walk-ups are also welcome. School sites designated for meal pick up starting March 18 are:

- Riverton Elementary School
- Lyman Moore Middle School
- Deering High School
- King Middle School
- East End Community School
- Presumpscot Elementary School
- Rowe Elementary School
- Peaks Island Elementary School

Staff will not be checking names or requiring identification, but meals are for children and teens only. They do not need to qualify for free or reduced-price lunch or be PPS students to receive these meals. Unfortunately, we are not allowed to serve meals to adults.

Students may pick up meals at any one of these sites - go to the site most convenient for your family. Meals cannot be consumed on site. Portland Public Schools buildings will continue to be closed to the public.

We encourage families to continue to be proactive in reducing the risk of COVID-19 by not congregating at the school site once meals have been distributed, continuing to wash your hands often, sneezing or coughing into a tissue and staying home when you are sick.

Additional meal options are being provided by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine. Their five clubhouses are closed through March 27, but families can pick up Grab-and-Go meals at the clubhouses from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday for any child in the community age 18 and under. The clubhouses are in Portland, South Portland, Riverton Park, Sagamore Village and Auburn/Lewiston.

Also, those willing to help PPS families experiencing food insecurity and can't afford to stock up on food during this pandemic, can do so by donating to the [PPS Food Fund](#) to help get these families through this crisis.

Learning Materials and Devices

There will be an opportunity to pick up learning materials and tech devices at your child's home school on Wednesday March 18th. Food distribution sites will also have copies of the elementary learning materials. To maximize social distancing, the distribution will take place either outdoors or in a large space such as a gym. As a further precaution, families are asked to only come to pick up learning materials if your child is not able to access them online and only pick up tech devices if your child doesn't have an alternate device at home.

There will be staggered schedules for pick-up at all schools (elementary/middle/high schools), alphabetically based on last name. Here is the schedule:

9:00 - 11:00 A-F

11:00 - 1:00 G-M

1:00 - 3:00 N-Z

Contact your child's school if you are unable to come during the particular time scheduled to arrange an alternate pick-up time. Here are more details:

Pre-K to Grade 5:

Grade specific Learning Packets for K- Grade 5 can be picked up at the children's home school or food distribution sites. If families have the ability to print and/or don't want to come in the building, Learning Packets can also be accessed online on the district website starting Wednesday, March 18th. Pre-K activity bags can be picked up at your child's school. The staggered schedule by alphabet will also apply.

Secondary Schools:

Middle and high school pick up is for learning materials, devices and band instruments ONLY. Please refer to communications from your child's school for more specific information.

Seventh- and eighth-graders already have been issued tech devices. If they have taken those home or have an alternate device at home, they should use those. Families of students who left their devices at school and don't have another alternative at home, should follow the staggered schedule to pick up their devices from school. The district is working on a plan to distribute devices to sixth-graders without access to devices at home.

The district is exploring options to get internet access to families that don't have it. Spectrum is offering free 60-day access to families who need internet access during the crisis. The district hopes to be able to offer hotspots when those devices become available.

Schools will be keeping track of student attendance starting March 18. More information on how that will happen will be communicated by each school.

This pandemic is uncharted territory for us all. But amidst all this uncertainty, one thing remains unchanged: The Portland Public Schools' commitment to ensuring our students continue learning while keeping them and our staff safe. I have confidence that if all of us in the Portland Public Schools community work together, we will achieve that goal.



Xavier Botana, Superintendent