



Building closures extended to the end of the school year

1 message

Sharonica Hardin-Bartley <news@ucityschools.org>
Reply-To: Communications@ucityschools.org

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THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
UNIVERSITY CITY
Transform the Life of Every Student Every Day!

Sharonica L. Hardin-Bartley, PhD, PHR
Superintendent of Schools
Ronald E. McNair Administration Building
8136 Groby Road
University City, Missouri 63130
(314) 290-4002
shardin@ucityschools.org

Dear U. City Schools Families and Staff:

After consulting with fellow school districts, regional health leaders and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is with great reluctance and sadness to tell you that we must extend our school building closures through the end of the 2019-20 school year.

I, like all of you, had hoped we would not have to make this decision. Like so many things involved with this strain of coronavirus, we must again accept our reality and adapt to our situation in courageous and intentional ways.

Although all classroom buildings will remain closed, The School District of University City will continue to educate and support your children with distance learning and community support programs through May 22, the scheduled last day of school.

This obviously raises many questions, particularly for our high school families. UCHS families, please expect additional communication from your principal, Mr. Michael Peoples, later today. I will address some basic points below. As always, I remind you that we are dealing with tremendous change very quickly, so we may not have all of the answers yet, but I encourage you to contact me or your school leaders if you have additional concerns:

- The District's Grab & Go Meal program for students will continue through the end of the school year and we are making plans for summer support, if needed. For more information go to www.ucityschools.org/GrabandGo. Masks and gloves will be used by volunteers at all times and social distancing will be respected. The District will fully adhere to the St. Louis County Health Department's newly released guidelines, [Guidance for School Districts and Food Delivery](#).
- All SDUC events, including sports competitions, practices and clubs, are canceled.
- Per the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, weather closure days will not be made up, so the last day of the school year remains May 22.
- A decision is pending on whether the UCHS Class of 2020 graduation will be held on its scheduled May 11 date at Chaifetz Arena. Alternative plans are being explored. We will keep you posted.
- Distance learning continues at all levels.
- Most district teachers and staff will continue to work from home.
- Staff and administration continue to meet regularly through Zoom and other virtual meeting platforms to improve distance learning plans, troubleshoot issues and identify students in need of extra support.
- Qualifying students will continue to receive services through our liaisons with the Special School District of St. Louis County.
- Counselors and therapists continue to work for our students.
- Plans are being developed for families and staff to safely retrieve personal items from schools.
- The District is currently examining ways to restructure its summer school programs so they are responsive to COVID-19 and the needs of our students.

I am pleased to note that our District finances are solid during this difficult time when jobless rates are soaring. Our year-round and 11-month contracted staff remain fully employed and have been actively engaged in educating your students and supporting family needs. This includes support staff such as secretaries and assistants who have taken on significant duties while stationed at home. **If you do not feel that your child's needs are being met, please contact me directly at shardin@ucityschools.org or 314-399-0941.** As a steward of taxpayer dollars, the District has reduced the use of many outside vendors, including food preparation, bus service, athletics referees and school security. We are additionally reviewing other contracts to ensure their services are needed and being utilized at this time.

Once more, I refer you back to the District's three pillars: to Humanize, Personalize and Problematize learning for your children. We work with our teachers everyday to bring those principles into distance learning and into this situation as a whole. As part of those principles, we are mindful of the challenges of distance learning in homes where parents are also balancing work and domestic life and increased worry and stress over health, employment and food security. We are here to help and have many resources to support you.

Finally, many of you have reached out regarding ways you can help the District through donations of time, money or resources. Thank you. I am humbled to be a part of this loving and caring community. We are currently working on a donation system to further support our families. Please keep an eye out soon for this plan.

In Service of Our Children,
Sharonica Hardin-Bartley, PhD, PHR
Superintendent of Schools

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