

March 20<sup>th</sup> Update

As we finish an unprecedented week of School-from-Home, let me say that our team has exceeded all of my expectations. Perhaps you saw the following from Ken Buck of South Carolina:

We gave educators almost no notice. We asked them to completely redesign what school looks like and in about 24 hours local administrators and teachers "Apollo 13'ed" the problem and fixed it. Kids learning, children being fed, needs being met in the midst of a global crisis. No state agency did this, no so-called national experts on curriculum. The local educators fixed it in hours. HOURS...No complaining and no handwringing - just solutions and amazingly clever plans...Remember that the next time someone tells you that teachers have it easy or try to persuade you that educators are not among the smartest, most ingenious people in society...Get out of the way of a teacher and watch with amazement at what really happens.

This captures the response of our Hall County Team and the learning that our students have experienced.

I have received a few heartfelt questions from caring individuals. I will attempt to address them below:

**Q: Is continuing school worth the effort?**

A: We absolutely believe it is. Many districts across the country are not in a position to continue learning at any meaningful level. The developmental loss for students, particularly young students, is almost incalculable. Our ability to lever digital resources has been an amazing asset our team has intentionally developed over the past several years. Additionally, when we return to "normal," we will be better able to meet the needs of our students because of continued learning away from school.

**Q: Why meals and bus routes? A team member may get COVID-19.**

A: People in our community will very likely contract COVID-19, and some type of social interaction is required to obtain meals in any situation. Many families are not in a position to purchase a 30-day supply of groceries, and they would require even more frequent social interaction to provide for their children. The social contact required for 15,000 students and their individual families to acquire daily meals is overwhelming; It is far greater than the interaction generated with our controlled delivery of meals utilizing a limited number of known people who socially distance and follow safety protocols. Additionally, it is impossible to quantify the value of interaction and the other significant needs we have discovered and met due to these routes occurring. Many stories detail students who are so appreciative to have some contact with caring adults, receiving diapers, books, etc.

If we have workers who are high risk because of underlying conditions, it has been our expectation from the beginning that they have consistently been encouraged to self-care and stay home if necessary.

**Q: How long is this going to go on?**

A: Conditions are changing hourly, and we will continue to alter plans and actions based upon current information. We will make decisions in a deliberate and fact-based manner, always prioritizing our team members and community needs and how we can best care for our boys and girls.

Have a great weekend,  
Will Schofield