April 2, 2020

To Our Parents, Guardians, and Students:

Yesterday, Governor Kemp issued an executive order prohibiting us from re-opening schools this school year. We are heartbroken over this decision because we wanted so much to see our students and return to normal, even if only for a few weeks before the summer break. However, we value the health and safety of our students, staff, parents, and community members, so we defer to Governor Kemp and his medical advisors.

We realize that all students do not have access to the Internet and a device to complete their online lessons. Rest assured that, while we want them to continue to work hard, so they are prepared for their next step in their educational career, we do not want any student to experience a decline from the grade received at the end of the third nine weeks. Therefore, as long as students show adequate effort in completing the assignments, whether online or in paper form, they will not see their grades decline. Students who put forth extra effort could see their grades improve slightly, but they will not experience a decline in their final grade. Students who were showing a failing grade for any subject at the end of the third nine weeks should contact their teacher to determine what they can do to bring up their grade. Only those failing at the end of the third nine weeks run the risk of being retained; all others will be promoted to the next grade if they show adequate effort on the assignments.

We will continue to provide meals at as many locations as possible, barring any positive COVID-19 tests within our staff. Should we have a positive at any feeding site, we will close that site, quarantine staff working that site, and direct everyone to utilize our remaining locations. We will not serve meals during Spring Break (April 6-10), but we will resume on Monday, April 13, and each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday through May 20, 2020. Meal service is considered essential and will continue through any “Shelter-in-place” orders.

Our thoughts go out to our seniors, and we are so sorry a virus that originated on the other side of the world has led to these unfortunate events here at home. Our high school administrators and staff are working on plans for some remote senior activities, so stay tuned! We looked forward to more region and state champions in spring sports, and we still consider our student-athletes and our coaches to be champions. We have re-scheduled graduation ceremonies for Saturday, June 13, 2020, as follows: BCHS—8:00 a.m. at Royal Stadium, and BCSA—10:00 a.m. in the BCHS Auditorium.

Our teachers, bus drivers, nutrition workers, and staff volunteers often spoke of how thankful our students were when we delivered meals to them. Now, as they pick up meals at our schools, our students and parents continue to show tremendous gratitude, and that is what makes this community so special. Adversity makes us bitter or better; we will get through this, and we will be better as a result. We hope you will use this extra time at home to strengthen family bonds, and maybe we will all read a little more, learn something new, and increase our appreciation for each other. We will continue to Expect Excellence in all we do, and we are here to serve our students, parents, and stakeholders. Thank you for your support of Bleckley County Schools, and thank you for staying six feet apart! Stay Safe, Royal Family!

If you have questions regarding assignments, please contact your child’s teacher. For any other questions, feel free to contact the principal or me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steve J. Smith
Superintendent, ssmith@expectexcellence.org