



# FANNIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Dr. Michael Gwatney

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March 27, 2020

Dear FCSS Community:

The purpose of this letter is to update you on a change to the information stated in my March 17 letter to the community regarding the duration of our district's closure due to COVID-19. Per an Executive Order issued by Governor Kemp yesterday (attached), **the FCSS will remain closed through April 24**. Likewise, all after-school activities remain cancelled; this also applies to all clubs and sports.

These times are unprecedented. All of us have aspects of our lives that are being affected by this pandemic. Things are not the same today as they were just a short time ago, but you may take comfort in knowing that we will pull through this together. This situation has placed all of us – faculty and staff, parents, and students – under pressure to redefine “school.” The classroom has “flipped,” and many services previously received at school are now being delivered out to the community. We are all learning together, on the fly, and I have been thankful for everyone's patience and grace as the new processes and routines have been established and are being improved. These challenges have been met with honor. In fact, I believe we will be better once this is over, as many of our recently adapted practices will become new and better future norms.

In the meantime, as we live one day at a time, it is important to find the bright spots and goodness in all of this. For example, the ideals of faith, hope, and love have come to the forefront as people have pulled together and focused on helping our children and each other. This crisis has proven to be a strong reminder of why this school system exists: *to serve our students*. I am proud of what has been accomplished by both our faculty and staff, as well as the community, to support the children of Fannin County.

There are no specific rulebooks for this, and much of it is out of our control, but I encourage you to focus on what you can do. This includes avoiding gatherings, implementing social distancing, and washing your hands frequently. Just as important, do what you can to make your immediate world better by continuing to love and support those around you. Whether it is an academic need or anything else, reach out to your child's school or my office; we will do what we can to help. My prayers continue for you and your family.

Sincerely,

Michael Gwatney, Ed.D.  
Superintendent



# THE STATE OF GEORGIA

## EXECUTIVE ORDER

BY THE GOVERNOR:

### EXTENDED SCHOOL CLOSURES TO STOP SPREAD OF COVID-19

- WHEREAS:** On March 14, 2020, due to the impact of COVID-19 on the State of Georgia, I issued Executive Order 03.14.20.01, declaring a Public Health State of Emergency in Georgia; and
- WHEREAS:** The Georgia General Assembly concurred with Executive Order 03.14.20.01 by joint resolution on March 16, 2020; and
- WHEREAS:** Executive Order 03.16.20.01 closed public elementary, secondary, and post-secondary schools in Georgia through March 31, 2020; and
- WHEREAS:** The Georgia Department of Public Health has determined that COVID-19 is spreading through communities; and
- WHEREAS:** The number of COVID-19 cases in Georgia continues to rise; and
- WHEREAS:** Further action is necessary to protect the health and safety of the population of Georgia, slow the spread of COVID-19, reduce the number of people who will become infected, and avoid unnecessary strain on Georgia's healthcare system; and
- WHEREAS:** During a state of emergency, Georgia law vests the Governor with powers and duties as may be deemed necessary to promote and secure the safety and protection of the civilian population; and
- WHEREAS:** Code Section 38-3-51(d)(1) vests the Governor with the power to suspend any regulatory statute prescribing the procedures for conduct of state business, or the orders, rules, or regulations of any state agency if strict compliance with any statute, order, rule, or regulation would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with the emergency or disaster; and
- WHEREAS:** In consultation with the Governor's Coronavirus Task Force and education, health, and emergency preparedness officials, I have determined that an extended closure of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary public schools is a necessary and appropriate action to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Georgia's residents and visitors to control the spread of COVID-19.

NOW, THEREFORE, PURSUANT TO CODE SECTION 38-3-51, AND THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME AS GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA, IT IS HEREBY

**ORDERED:** That school closures mandated by Executive Order 03.16.20.01 are hereby extended by the terms included in this Order.

**IT IS FURTHER**

**ORDERED:** That public elementary and secondary schools shall remain closed for in-person instruction through April 24, 2020 with limited exceptions for meal preparation and distribution, continuity of distant learning opportunities, and any other necessary functions as determined by the local school superintendent.

**IT IS FURTHER**

**ORDERED:** That public post-secondary schools shall remain closed for in-person instruction with limited exceptions for the rest of the semester.

**IT IS FURTHER**

**ORDERED:** That actions not addressed by this Order related to the health, safety, and welfare of the students, faculty, and staff of the University System of Georgia and Technical College System of Georgia may be determined by the Chancellor of the University System of Georgia and Commissioner of the Technical College System of Georgia for their respective post-secondary education systems.

**IT IS FURTHER**

**ORDERED:** That this Order shall not prevent remote learning or online programs developed for students by the University System of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, the Georgia Board of Education, or any local school district.

**IT IS FURTHER**

**ORDERED:** That the Georgia Department of Public Health and Georgia Department of Education implement measures for the health, nutrition, safety, and educational needs of students during this school closure period.

This 26<sup>th</sup> day of March 2020.

  
GOVERNOR