April 1st, 2020

Dear Southern Parents and Students,

I would first like to thank you for your patience and support during the last few weeks. These are very uncertain times for all of us and no doubt stressful. For some of us, this move to E-Learning is an exciting opportunity to learn new ways to integrate technology. For others, it is overwhelming and intimidating. Keep in mind as we go through this journey, this is new to all of us as we try new and different things. At Southern, what matters most is remaining connected to our students while supporting them academically, socially and emotionally during this time.

We are making our plans for the continuity of learning based on the information shared by our Superintendent, Dr. George Arlotto. Please know we are all working hard to navigate these uncharted waters. The Southern staff is committed to your students and will work to do the very best we can to support them. This is a new experience for everyone - teachers, parents, students, and school staff. We know everyone involved will work together to make this a positive experience for the students.

To provide continuity in learning, we will be using Google Classroom and AACPS Digital Resources. Directions on how to access Google Classroom and AACPS Digital Resource are on our SHS website for students and parents to provide support.

On the Google Classroom, teachers will communicate what expectations are in regard to learning and assignments; teachers will communicate which assignment will be graded for the week and when it is due; teachers may have videotaped live instruction, video tutorials and additional resources to help students learn. Students should know that the re-do policy is not in effect for quarter four.

All teachers will have a schedule to be available to students 1.5 hours during the timeframe 8-11 and 1.5 hours during the timeframe 1-4pm. Teachers will post their schedule on the Google Classroom. One of the 1.5 hour time blocks will be Office Hours, where students will be able to communicate with their teacher through Google Classroom. This will be the time to ask/answer questions, seek assistance, and gain clarification. The other 1.5 hour block of time will be E-Learning. During E-learning, teachers will be providing live instruction: working with students in small groups to ensure they are understanding the content and mastering the skills, etc. If a student is not available for learning at the teacher’s time, that is okay. Everything will be recorded and posted so that students and parents can access those items using Google Classroom at a time that is convenient for them.

Starting this week, students also need to contact teachers via email or Google Classroom to complete missing work and respond to the Google Classroom request from all their teachers. Southern teachers are using emails that we have on file to communicate the Google code. We are asking students to contact teachers via email if they do not receive a Google code for a teacher. AACPS Digital Resource and Google Classroom handouts are on our SHS website for students and parents to provide support.

Students should be ready to access their Google Classroom for each teacher they have on their schedule beginning on April 6th, 2020. E-learning will not look like a traditional school day. Students will be able to access the Google Classroom at any time in order to complete the assignments at their own pace and at times that fit their schedule and submit assignments by the due date.
From April 9th-thru April 13th, Maryland State Board of Education has decided to honor Spring Break for all students in Maryland. Therefore, there will be no Office Hours or E-Learning instruction during that time.

Beginning Tuesday, April 14th, 2020, e-learning will be in full swing. Students will be engaged in e-learning for each class that is on their schedule. Please visit https://www.aacps.org/elearning for several helpful resources including Suggested Daily Schedules for Students.

If your child receives services through Special Education, your child’s case manager will be reaching out to you about the continuity of learning and any upcoming scheduled meetings. They will be working closely with the classroom teachers to provide services for our students. Please remember that these services will look different than how they were provided within the schoolhouse setting.

I hope this communication has provided you with some clarification. I will remain in contact with our Southern community as more information is provided to us. I am grateful for your continued support and patience as we work through this new. Please feel free to contact administration or school counselors if you have questions or concerns.

We are committed to making sure all our students at Southern are successful. We are ready to embark on this new journey together. We will get through this with patience, compassion, communication, and flexibility.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at aahopkins1@aacps.org.

Sincerely,
Angela Hopkins, Principal
Southern High