Dear Lawrence Public Schools Families,

On Tuesday, March 17, Kansas Governor Laura Kelly ordered all public school buildings to remain closed for regular operations through the end of the school year. This unprecedented action is meant to help slow the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in our state and communities.

First and foremost, we hope you and your family are doing well during this challenging and uncertain time. Our nation’s and community’s responses to COVID-19 are quite fluid and rapidly changing. This is a big change for all of us. We know it will require a shift in how we think about providing support to our students with exceptionalities and their families.

Next week, all families should begin receiving communication from their respective school(s) regarding initial plans for continuous learning for your student with exceptionalities. School teams are working hard to plan meaningful educational experiences for students. Thank you in advance for giving our teachers grace as they are quickly responding to new methods and expectations with meaningful student growth in mind.

Case managers will share information about how special education services can be braided into the continuous learning plan to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities to the extent that is appropriate in light of our current situation. I encourage you to contact your building principal or case manager as questions arise.

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) has been consistent in the message that our programming for students with exceptionalities will be based on Lawrence Public Schools' Continuous Learning Plan, which will be submitted to KSDE. We are working with KSDE's continuous learning and special education guidance to draft a district plan that will support our students’ needs.
The health and safety of all students and staff is our priority. Given the current circumstances, we are not providing any in-person services at this time. During this time of school closures and ‘Stay at Home’ orders, we will work to consider what general education is providing and offer special education services that are appropriate, accessible, and reasonable in light of the circumstances we face.

We understand the challenges that accompany a school closure, and we are here to partner with you during this time. We also will work with our Lawrence Special Education Advisory Committee to share resources that may be useful to families in this time of uncertainty. Together, we will get through this public health crisis and support student learning.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Kevin L. Harrell
Executive Director
Student Services and Special Education