

Update for Parents

March 14, 2018

We appreciate...

- ☛ **Parents**, for how supportive, patient and understanding you've been as we worked to keep classes going so our students wouldn't face excessive make-up days.

We know you had to help your students cope with concerns about the damage the fire caused.

We know you had to help your students through the anxiety of going to a new building and new routines.

We know some of you have students at more than one of the host schools and that made getting arrangements for drop-off and pick-up a hassle.

We know – and we appreciate how you've stepped up to support us.

- ☛ **Students**, for how mature and responsible you've been as you adjusted to your new locations. Your teachers and staff and the host teachers and staff brag about how well-behaved, how conscientious and how courteous you've been.
- ☛ **Our community**, for all the support and encouragement you've given our students and staff. You've volunteered your church buildings, provided meals for our staff, donated supplies, encouraged our students, parents and staff.
- ☛ **Our host schools**, for how enthusiastically and professionally you welcomed Andrew Jackson Middle students and staff into your buildings – unselfishly sharing your spaces and your supplies and your time.
- ☛ **Our emergency responders**, for how quickly you got to the fire, how bravely you attacked it and how helpful you've been in helping us determine the damage the fire caused and what we can do to prevent fires and lessen the damage future fires might cause.
- ☛ **Our district staff**, for how you all pitched in to get a plan in place to get students back in classes, to meet the needs of staff and to get cleaning and repairs done.
- ☛ **From superintendent Jonathan Phipps**, "I'm so proud of our students, parents, staff, community and emergency responders for all they've done to take bad luck and turn it into a testimony for how committed we are to working together to respond to this challenge.

"We're overwhelmed by community support – not just from the Andrew Jackson area – but also from Buford, Indian Land and Lancaster.

"The #AJStrong is very appropriate for what's happened here, but I also think #LancasterCountyStrong describes all the support and encouragement we've gotten from all over our county. Thank you all for your hard work and quick response that have helped us keep students in classes."

What we've faced...

- ☛ **We were hopeful** – after we learned the fire was contained in one janitor's closet – that cleaning and repairs could be finished in a week or two.

But we underestimated how damaging and penetrating smoke from a fire could be and how much unseen damage the 1700° fire in the closet and the 600° temperatures in the cafeteria and down the halls caused.

We also didn't know the ductwork that had to be replaced in the offices and some cafeteria area doors would have to be special ordered, meaning we couldn't get them for weeks.

When we'll reopen...

- ☛ **The latest date** we'll reopen is the Monday after spring break – April 16. Of course, challenges could arise that we can't foresee, but we're confident we can open by then.

We continue to work to possibly reopen before that date, but the timeline for receiving those special order items will make an earlier reopening difficult unless the items arrive early.

Classrooms, offices and common areas like the media center, gym, offices and restrooms are almost all cleaned and put back together.

Work is pretty much complete on cleaning/repairing other ductwork and the school's heating/air conditioning units.

The had-to-be-painted areas are almost done, and this summer, we'll paint the areas we can't finish before April 16.

We'll also replace all tile this summer.

Costs

- ☛ **Our insurance** is covering the costs for clean-up and repairs – exactly why we make sure we adequately insure our facilities.
- ☛ **The estimate** we had earlier of \$1 million has now risen to around \$3 million.

Making up days missed

- ☛ Days missed must be made up unless waived by our school board. State law allows the board to waive up to 3 days.
- ☛ The board is in favor of waiving the days if those waived-days aren't needed for future days missed for bad weather.

Phone numbers

- ☛ Andrew Jackson High 803-475-2318
- ☛ Heath Springs Elementary 803-273-3176
- ☛ Kershaw Elementary 803-475-6655