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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NORTH ADAMS PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO CLOSE FOR TWO WEEKS**

NORTH ADAMS, MA (March 13, 2020) – Today, we are announcing the North Adams Public Schools will be closed for the next two weeks in response to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. We expect to resume the regular school schedule on Monday, March 30.

In announcing this decision we are working in collaboration and alignment with superintendents and districts across Berkshire County. We are making this unprecedented decision based on the latest information we received from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH).

Earlier today superintendents from across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts participated in a joint conference call with the commissioners of DESE and DPH. These state officials provided guidance of the state response and recommendations for school districts to address and respond to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Among the recommendations was that communities that are seeing an increase in community transmission of Coronavirus should consider closing for 14 days. Community transmission means that there are patients who are diagnosed or presumptive for the Coronavirus who do not meet the patterns related to international travel or close contact with a confirmed Coronavirus patient.

The Department of Public Health (MDPH) data for Berkshire County indicates that we are seeing such an increase in community transmission.

This condition, and the rapidly-changing situation in the Berkshires led us to join other Berkshire County school districts in making the decision to close for the next two weeks.

North Adams Public Schools (NAPS) district staff are working to ensure that all students will have access to meals during the closure period with meal distribution being made to Colegrove Park and Brayton elementary schools from 11 a.m. to noon daily.

In addition, all NAPS district staff will continue to be paid for the next two weeks.

This is an unprecedented and challenging decision, but we believe it is the correct decision for our students, our educators, and the community. We know this will disrupt routines and lives for many families and caregivers, and we do not have all the answers at this time.

Additional information regarding to access to technology for educational programming and communication with the administration can be found at the district website:  
<https://www.napsk12.org/>.

We will continue to keep our school community and the community at large informed as our response continues to develop.