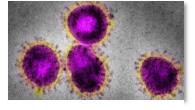
THE STINGER

Irmo High School's Student Newspaper

Spring 2020/Issue #3









Dear Yellow Jackets,

The message below was written originally for our seniors as a part of the <u>Irmo News</u> and <u>Lake</u>

<u>Murray News</u> publications, but I feel it is appropriate to share with all of you.

You will one day be our new leaders; how you prepare is a choice only you can make. This time in our world's history has afforded you an opportunity to refocus your academic lives in important areas, and your work right now will aid you in refocusing your future.

In his Annual Message to Congress, Abraham Lincoln fought hard to get the world back in focus. "As our case is new," Lincoln said, "so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country." Lincoln speaks of redefining ourselves to unite and create a stronger country.

You are being called to "think anew, and act anew" at this moment in *our* history. We must "redefine ourselves" to

adapt to a bold and ever-changing world in which we will live. Through inevitable change, you will experience new opportunities for success; those life changing chances for success cannot be overlooked, for those chances will come and go in the blink of an eye. So, prepare yourselves to embrace those chances for success through hard work, both in and out of the classroom.

Your basic keys to success have been given to you; you must dedicate yourselves to make crucial decisions regarding your future. Your level of success will not be supplied by family, teachers, or friends. It will ultimately, and simply, come down to you.

Remember, IRMO means "I Respect Myself and Others."

Your #ProudPrincipal, Dr. Robin L. Hardy



Life is Good!

by Angela McGregor <u>The Stinger</u> Advisor

It all seems so surreal, doesn't it? Just a few weeks ago we were going about our normal routines, learning, laughing, and living together, live and in person at Irmo High.

Now we are living a new normal.

As the school year races to a close, students and staff are mastering the fine art of communicating, learning and teaching from a distance. We miss seeing and interacting with each other. We miss spring sports, prom, performances and hanging out in the courtyard after lunch.

Yet, life is good.

We have all learned a lot about ourselves. Before March 12, would you have described yourself as being flexible and adaptable? Did you know that you could take the reins of your education and learn anything anywhere? Did you understand just how many people are invested in you and how much they miss you?

Things are different, but different does not equal bad. We can embrace the change and make things even better. Don't be socially distant, even if you must maintain physical distance. Check in with people. Call your friends. (Okay, I'll call my friends; you can text and Facetime yours.) Wear a mask while in close quarters with others. Attend to your education. Clean your room. Exercise. Wash your hands. Eat healthy food. Walk your dog. Ask for help if you need it. Help people who need it. Show gratitude for those who are helping us maintain some semblance of normalcy.

Little things can make a big difference. Truth be told, the McGregors are *that* family. Much to the delight of our neighbors (and ourselves) we display about



40 inflatables at Christmas time. We decided to put up just a few for a little levity. Our neighbors are ecstatic about the

9.5-foot duck and his friends. Little things.

We've got this, Irmo nation!

I Love a Parade!

School District Five is committed to celebrating the Class of 2020. Last year, School District Five Superintendent, Dr. Christina Melton, started a tradition of having seniors return to their elementary schools to walk the halls and be honored and celebrated by their former teachers and current elementary students.

To continue this tradition in a new way and observe social distancing guidelines, District Five will host senior drive-thrus at middle schools. Like our senior supply pick-up, our Senior Parade 2.0 events will include music, photography, décor, and

school staff cheering on the Class of 2020!

All seniors are encouraged to decorate their cars and participate, even if they joined the district as a



secondary school student. Photos of seniors (and any family choosing to ride through with their senior) will be taken and posted on social media for everyone to enjoy.

<u>Details:</u>

Irmo Middle School Friday, May 22, 2020 10:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Kids (Not) in the Hall

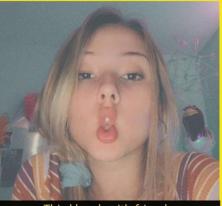
We asked: "What do you miss the most about being at Irmo High?"



The in-person learning and friends. Antaliyah Brown, 9



I miss getting out of the house. Rachel Harper, 12



Third lunch with friends. Sonni-Rae Brewer, 9



l miss a lot of my friends and teachers. l also miss the pep rallies and my dance class. Kaylin Jones, 9



All my teachers and friends. Tay Jones, 12

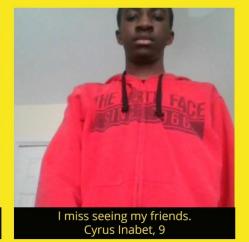


I miss being around people besides my immediate family members and I miss walking from class to class. Cheyenne Cummings, 9



Carina thansacha Uhara

Seeing the people I love. Andrea Delcid, 9



Kids (Not) in the Hall

We asked: "What have you been doing since the shutdown?"

l've been sleeping a lot, working out, and doing school work. Haley Hinson, 9



Schoolwork is piling in, so I've been focusing on that, some small personal projects, and reading. I've been trying (and failing) to be productive. Sydney Stewart, 10



Researching and staying up to date on the political events, and playing piano virtually for the church. I started doing at-home workouts since I can't do my

track workouts.

Alex Blocker, 10

I celebrated my 16th birthday! I did a mini photoshoot to celebrate the big milestone, and then I cut my birthday cake. Chelsea Brown, 10 Caling outside for at least 10 minutes

Going outside for at least 10 minutes every morning, working and writing. Alexis McKnight, 10



l've been doing school work, watching TV and relaxing. Damian Pantoja, 10

Going to the store and doing my homework. Ashley Risher, 9





I have been reaching out to some of my classmates to make sure they are not in need of anything. I have taken advantage of this time to complete personal goals, tasks around the house, and school work. This epedimic has been a hard time, but it will pass over eventually, allowing us to come back to school with a new mindset and better habits! Destiny Evans, 9



Irmo Earns Green Step School Certification

by Jack Ostergaard Pictures by Esra Buckson

Mrs. Linda Byars is our school's volunteer gardener who teaches our



students how to garden and take care of the environment. She assists with our school's Green Step School program and recently secured a spot at our school for rain barrels.

John Oxner, Director of Soil and Water Conservation for Lexington County, taught some of our special needs students how to make rain barrels. Mary Hite, from Lexington County Public Works, also came to help with the project. They made a total of two rain barrels from recycled pickle



barrels. Each rain barrel can hold up to 40 gallons of

rainwater. This is not only better for our

environment because it allows for the reuse of water, and it is better for the plants in our gardens. Normal city water contains fluoride, which is not good for plants. Rainwater, on the other hand, contains nitrogen, a nutrient that is a key element of chlorophyll. Chlorophyll gives plants their green color and helps create food for plants through photosynthesis.

Students were taught how to use drills, install mesh and spigots, and much more. According to the SC Green Steps Schools website, a Green Steps School serves the community by "establishing sustainability projects where students learn, do, and teach others." Irmo High School International School for the Arts is proud to be a certified Green Steps School. Many thanks to Mrs. Byars and our Special Education and IB teachers and students for earning us this honor!

The rain barrels will help Irmo High School for years to come as they assist us in maintaining sustainable water resources for our greenhouse, and opportunities for students to Learn, Do, and Teach!



When students were invited to submit works of art for publication, one student answered the call. The short story that follows is an example of why we are Irmo High School International School for the arts. <u>The Stinger</u> is proud to present:

Walkers

by Alyssia Gaston

"Dad," Akira whispers, dewy eyes glossed and on the verge of tears. "I'm scared." His voice is a beacon in the dark. The only semblance of something human. The only connection to human life.

A loud rattle shakes the closet door, causing Akira to sink into his father's side, now trembling in fear.

"It's going to be alright, son." His father's thick Asian accent drawls on each vowel, time seeming to slow in the process. They've been hiding for what feels like hours, a heavy bookshelf being the only thing keeping unwanted guests out, and the two of them in.

The sounds of hissing creatures echo throughout the entire house, loud enough to cause an eruption of the natural sound barrier, it seems. They drown out Akira's words as well as his thoughts.

He sees his dad motioning to the small lighter in his hand. His small knuckles have paled a stark white against the polished metal. It doesn't take long for his father to take the lighter from him, immediately telling him to keep quiet with a firm finger pressed to his lip.

"I—" Akira rubs at his eyes angrily. He knows he shouldn't be crying because boys are tough, and boys don't let it seem like they've broken. They have to protect the most important people to them in life, have to stay strong for them. Akira doesn't even know where his mom is right now. She'd been out in the backyard getting ready to feed the chickens when a dozen or so walkers broke through the partially secured barrier, chunks of flesh getting caught in the barbed wire fencing. He can only hope she made it inside the small barn located next to the shack they call home.

"Akira," His father starts "I have a plan, but I need you to help me. As soon as it's followed through, you need to make a run for the barn to find your mother." He says. At the time, Akira couldn't recognize the sorrow in his own father's voice, the way his upper lip quivered the more he spoke, the way his hands shakily pulled him into a tight embrace that seemed to last forever. He should have picked up on what was about to happen by the way his dad kissed his forehead, then his cheek then told him to take care of his mother.

But he was only a child. He couldn't have tried to stop the events that followed even if he wanted to. There's nothing that stands in the way of a man protecting his family, the people he loves more than himself, the people he wakes to every morning and says goodnight to whenever the sky finally reaches its deepest hue and the stars are all visible. Akira's father's purpose was to ensure that Akira had a future, that he could grow up protecting himself so that he could protect his mother so that when this was all over, they could live out the rest of their lives happily together.

Now Akira stands midst a crowded closet, Pepsi can in one hand, knife in the other, tears streaming down his reddened cheeks as he is unable to hold them back any longer. And when his father opens the closet door, Akira throws the can as far as he can into the living room. All the undead limp over to the sound--what's left of their bodies brushing past one another--towards the soda can.

"Aishiteruyo, otōsan." He croaks out, lungs heaving for air.

"Watashi mo anata o aishitemasu," He says, and then he's pushing Akira forward, beckoning him to fill out the rest of the plan.

And Akira does. He sprints out the front door and around the house as fast as his little legs will carry him. He knows he can go to his mother and save his dad if he just runs faster.

His mom greets him at the barn door, throwing herself at him, not caring if something were to come up behind her and sink its teeth into the base of her neck the same way they'd done to any chickens that got loose.

"Mom we have to get back to the house! We have to save dad! We-" His cries are cut off by a loud explosion. Akira watches in horror as their house, their home, the only home Akira has ever known, lights up the nearest mile with bright yellow flames. Walkers attempt to leave through the back door but disintegrate into piles of ash before they step a foot outside. The light covers everything in a white film, causing Akira to squeeze his eyes shut. He only opens them to stare at the back door, to wait for his father to come running out, eyes blazing with adrenaline.

Only he doesn't come, and the fire keeps blazing.

Akira can't move, he feels paralyzed. He doesn't budge when his mother tugs at his arm, nor at the sight of the fire's embers jumping out onto the nearby trees. He has to be carried over the shoulder by his mom, who is now running with all her legs can muster at this point. When he does appear from his trance, his eyes can't help but burn with hot tears as he watches the rest of his house shrivel up under the flames of his dad's metal lighter, growing smaller in the distance.

Driving. Akira's entire body aches from maintaining the uncomfortable seating position while cruising on the open road. There isn't another working vehicle in sight, leaving the entirety of both lanes to himself, which he mildly appreciates. His skin burns under his dark clothing from the sun's dangerous rays. It causes sweat to pearl at the top of his forehead, the occasional droplet trickling down his cheek like a salted tear. He's dying to pull over and stretch his limbs, but he told himself he'd wait until his tank was almost empty and then he could stretch when he was refilling his bike.

It doesn't take long for his brain to take over and pull him off the highway to the nearest gas station so that he could not only stretch and refuel but empty his bladder as well. A few minutes on the property and Akira has it cleared of any walkers. One quick jab of his knife through each head and he's alone again.

Akira absolutely hates siphoning gas. Mostly it's the taste that gets to him. He doesn't swallow it, but the pungent odor of the gasoline fills his lungs and nostrils long before he gets the chance to get the last drops of gas out of the Black Sedan parked half a block away from his motorcycle. He coughs, peeling his mouth from the siphoning tube, eyes squeezed shut during the process.

When his lungs fill with fresh oxygen, he peers up at the building in front of him. The sign that once stood with all its letters now reads "FEMRT" but Akira makes out the faint shadow of the missing letters and comes to the conclusion that it's supposed to say "Fresh Mart". As if on cue, his stomach erupts in a fit of anger, letting Akira know he really can't go any more days without food.

"It'll be just a minute, Red." He assures his bike, though if anyone were here, they'd probably look at him as a crazy man because he was just talking to his vehicle.

He unsheathes his knife once more and enters the small mom and pop grocery store with caution. The lights obviously don't work but Akira manages to make out the different aisles thanks to the sun's lighting and it looks like he's hit the Elysium of canned goods, that is until the expiration dates read years long past. He thinks he should be good to eat a can or two of red beans and sweet corn but the smell wafting from them upon stabbing the cans open assures him that they are long gone. Akira isn't planning on leaving this world because of a few cans of rank food, so he tosses the cans and continues searching.

Though he doesn't find any luck in the food department, the medicine seems fully stocked and not expired. Akira thumbs a few labels that read "ibuprofen" and "acetaminophen" and he recognizes the generic brand for cold and flu tablets. He snags them all into his jacket pockets but nearly has a heart attack when a loud thud shakes the rack of digestives to his left.

"Crap," he hears a voice curse and Akira holds out his blade instinctively. It's worse to have to deal with other humans, they aren't as easy to get rid of as walkers, and somehow, they're louder and more annoying than them too.

Akira thinks he should wait to see if the person leaves, but the more irrational part of him decides to turn the corner and rush the guy because he doesn't have all day to sit around, daylight is literally burning up and waiting would waste the few hours of sunlight he has left to travel over seventy miles.

So, he grabs a hold of the guy, spins him around, and hovers the flesh of his neck with his knife.

"H-hey, man, no need to bring the knives out." The guy says. This only causes Akira to press the flat surface of his knife to the base of his neck because although he's holding the man basically at gunpoint, he has no intentions of killing him, especially not someone who looks so defenseless with his tall stature and worried expression that projects from his entire body in shaking spasms.

"Where did you come from?" Akira raises his head to meet the guy's eyes. Staring back are bright orbs, the freshest ocean blue eyes that put all other blue eyes, and really any other eye color, to shame. He hasn't seen eyes this inviting since before he was nine.

"Ask a guy out on a date first, sheesh," Is all he says, and Akira immediately redacts any nice thoughts he had of this guy. He presses the knife with more force against his neck, able to feel him tremble when he swallows. "Okay! Okay! Can you stop it with the knife?"

Akira lowers his knife but keeps it in his hand in case he has to use it, instead opting to crumple the fabric of his shirt between his fingers.

"Answer my question." He repeats, the deep scowl on his face letting the other guy know he isn't here to play games.

"Down south. I'm alone I swear, I have been for months now." He says and Akira takes notice in the black strap trailing down the guy's chest. This is the first time he realizes he's carrying a rifle. A rifle that might be loaded and ready to use the moment Akira is caught off guard.

"You look clean. Where are you staying?" Akira asks, watching as the man's hands fidget under the question.

"Where are you staying?" He repeats.

"So, you do have a brain up there. For a minute I actually thought you were here to attempt to take me out and snag my things." Akira tightens his grip on his knife handle.

The guy shifts between the balls and heels of his feet anxiously and Akira would have pegged him as a wasted case were it not for the devilish smirk and small glint in his eyes as he carefully calculates his next few words.

"I actually didn't know you were in here until you came at me with a knife to the throat!" He retorts, crossing his arms childishly. If he weren't so cocky, he probably wouldn't be alone, Akira thinks.

"In that case carry on looting, I have business to attend." Akira huffs. And with that, he lets go of his shirt and makes his way to the exit.

He's halfway out the front door when he hears an "At least let me patch you up," followed by a "Don't think I didn't notice the blood-soaked gauze you have sticking out near your collarbone!" Akira glances down at his shoulder, reliving the events that gave him the nasty wound. "I'm good," Akira says, but the guy is persistent. He follows him all the way to his motorbike going on about how he could die if an infection arises as a result of his poor self-hygiene.

"Just let me help! I don't want to watch you throw your life away like that! I'll take you back to my place I have the proper medicine to help you, there's even an extra room you could sleep in for the night," He's practically shouting and Akira is about to hit him upside the head with the hilt of his knife if he doesn't quiet down because his shrilling voice is going to call over any walkers in the area, and Akira doesn't have the strength in him to worry about killing them and watching over this guy at the same time.

"Okay," Akira starts, reluctant to continue speaking. "Will you leave me alone if you patch me up and whatever else you were just going on about?" His scowl deepens when the man's eyes light up.

He nods.

Akira agrees not because he cares about getting an infection, or because he doesn't want to have blood on his hands from killing him, or even because he thinks he could get hooked up with a good supply of rations, but because agreeing is the only way to get the annoying bastard to stay quiet.

"Half your rations," Akira says, and he most certainly means it.

"What?" He replies, face struck with uncertainty.

"I want half the food you have." Akira raises. "Otherwise I leave with an infection and you'll have no ride back to wherever it is you've been living."

Without hesitation, he agrees.

"Deal." And he's hopping onto the back of Akira's bike like he was prepared for this, arms hovering over his waist as the engine roars to life. "Doctor Lance is going to nurse you back to health!"

Akira rolls his eyes and starts driving down the road in the guided direction.

"This is turning into one hell of a day, huh, Red," Akira mutters, completely ignoring a dozen questions Lance asks, acting as if he can't hear his voice over the thrum of his engine and the rock rolling under his bike's wheels. "One hell of a day."

Freshman Alyssia Gaston is a gifted student, artist, and writer.

FBLA Takes Care of Business at State

Irmo's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) had another impressive showing at state competition, held in North Charleston.

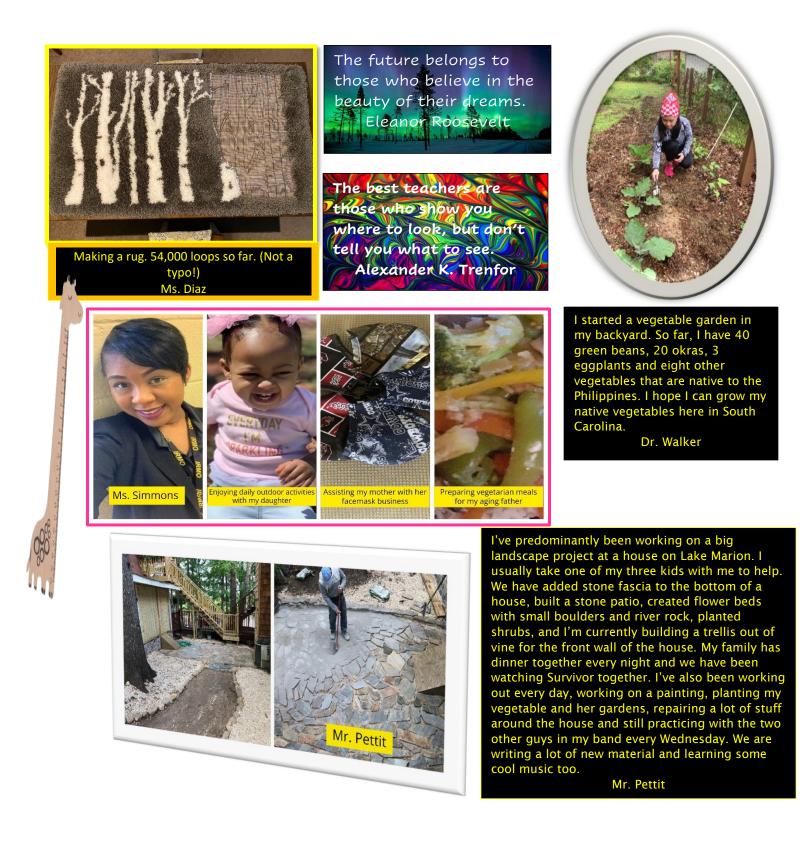
Garrett Priester and D'Avion Deas led the team, placing first in Accounting and Personal Finance, respectively.

Meaghan Waddell, Tamar Washington and Camille Ramirez placed fourth in the Entrepreneurship Team category. Ten family members joined the competitors for the awards banquet. FBLA is advised by Ms. Carolyn Searles. Congratulations to all competitors.



Teachers in the Walls

We asked: "Other than teaching remotely, what have you been doing during the shutdown?"



Teachers in the Walls

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Message to Students

(Revised from District Five of Lexington & Richland Counties' Website)

School District Five is committed to communicating information regarding school closures, distance learning and feeding sites. The communication was revised for relevance to Irmo High School students. Please read the updates below regarding end-of-year grading dates and deadlines and other closure information and reminders.

END OF YEAR GRADING DATES AND DEADLINES

Date	This Day is
Friday, May 15, 2020	Seniors' last day for course completion and demonstration of mastery. Any course remediation must be finalized. The last day for seniors to turn in work for a grade (grade 12).
Friday, May 22, 2020	The last date that teachers can require/assign work that will be graded (grades 9-11).
Monday, May 25, 25020	Memorial Day Holiday
Tuesday, May 26 – Friday, June 5, 2020	Optional "enrichment" assignments. This is optional, non- graded work that students may choose to complete. Teachers will provide feedback, but there will be no grades assigned. Students should complete all graded assignments assigned during the combined third and fourth quarters before completing optional assignments. Teachers will maintain virtual hours through June 5 to assist students with these and other assignments as needed (grades 9-11).
Friday, May 29, 2020	Last day for students to submit paper-based assignments for a grade (grades 9-11).
Monday, June 1, 2020	Last day for students to submit work electronically for a grade by 11:59 p.m. (grades 9-11).
Friday, June 5, 2020	Last day of school (grades 9-11).
Friday, June 12, 2020	Report cards mailed (grades 9-12).

Distance Learning Update for Families

Below are details on how students/families will receive feedback and grades from Distance Learning assignments.

- The purpose of all grade reporting within Parent Portal and/or Google Classroom will be to give students feedback on assignments identified by your child's teacher.
- "Missing" will be placed within Parent Portal until the student submits the work.
- Final Exams will not be administered (secondary schools).
- Final grades reported on the Report Card (June 12th) will be based on Quarter 3 grades and Distance Learning grades that maintain or improve each student's current grade or achievement. That means that there is nothing to lose and everything to gain by completing assignments given between January 17 and May 22. Penalties will not be assessed for late work.
- Families are encouraged to reach out to their child's teachers/school administrator if he/she is experiencing hardships during Distance Learning so they can create an individualized plan to address your needs.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please reach out to your child's teacher or a school administrator: <u>www.lexrich5.org/D5StaffDirectory</u>

GRADUATION UPDATE

Irmo High's graduation ceremony will be on Friday, June 5 at 9:00 a.m. The ceremony will be held at the Irmo High School stadium. Graduates will be allowed four guests each, and ceremonies will be live-streamed and recorded. Our weather make-up time is June 5 at 7:00 p.m. "We sought feedback from student leaders at our high schools, used survey results from our seniors and their parents, and also included principals and other school staff to create an event that keeps safety at the forefront, while celebrating 2020 graduates," said Dr. Christina Melton, superintendent of School District Five. "Graduation is a major milestone for our students and our parents, and we are committed to making these ceremonies safe, celebratory events that honor all the steps our students have taken to get to this point in their lives."

REMINDER: DISTANCE LEARNING RESOURCES

Distance Learning will continue in School District Five. Our teachers and district staff are working to create additional instructional materials for students and possible opportunities for some students to participate in teleconferencing and two-way communications between teachers and students.

- Reminder: School District Five has a webpage to provide resources to free Wi-fi providers, technology information and more. Visit: <u>www.lexrich5.org/distancelearning</u>.
- Teachers and other district staff will continue to work virtually. Students and parents can email their teachers or an administrator for help and instruction on materials. Office hours for teachers are Monday through Friday, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- During the closure, School District Five staff will be working virtually, and email is the quickest and most efficient way to get answers to your questions. Visit: <u>https://www.lexrich5.org/d5staffdirectory</u>.

D5 FEEDING SITES REMINDER

Free meals for children age 18 or younger are offered on Mondays only at six schools in Lexington-Richland School District Five. Students receive 5 days-worth of breakfast and 7 days' worth of lunch items, during the Monday meal offering.

- To ensure we serve as many children as possible each week, families should visit only one of our sites each week and accept 1 (one) 5-day supply (per child age 18 and under) each week. Though students are not required to be present at feeding sites, parents will be required to show their students' ID cards, if they have them. If they do not have them, they will be required to sign their name and list their children's names in order to receive the meals.
- Click here for more information and for feeding site locations: <u>https://bit.ly/2wCpFt9</u>
- Feeding site menu items reheating instructions and nutritional facts can be found online at the following link: <u>https://bit.ly/2V470Ng</u>

STAY CONNECTED

School District Five is committed to communicating the latest updates and information regarding school closures, distance learning and feeding sites.

- 1. Parents/Guardians: If you are not currently receiving texts or emails from the district and would like to, please contact your student(s)' school registrar.
- 2. Visit the district website, <u>www.lexrich5.org</u>.
- 3. Connect with us on social media.
 - Facebook: <u>https://www.facebook.com/LexRich5Schools</u>
 - Twitter: <u>https://twitter.com/LexRich5Schools</u>
 - o Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/lexrich5schools/