Distance Learning for
Contemporary Issues (12th Grade) - G
Week #3, April 20 - 24

Essential Question:
How has the Covid 19 pandemic information and facts changed over time?

Instructions:
1. As we move through this historic pandemic around COVID-19, journal how our government reacts to a nation in crisis. Document where you get your sources of information, noting why those sources are credible. A journal entry can be as simple as a paragraph documenting info and dates.

2. Maintain a journal of events by making at least 3 different entries each week. Below is the focus that each week’s journal should touch on. It can be online using Google Docs or on paper. (3 Journal entries x 4 weeks = 12 total entries of your work)

3. Choose one of the following ways to present your information: a Paper, a Journal (Paper), a PowerPoint or a Video Journal.

Week #3
Focus on Maryland. How has Maryland responded to the crisis - think about the limitations placed on its citizens and how those went from small to shelter at home; the money allocated for things such as essential workers. Include at least one area where the state dropped the ball and should have done more: explain.

Below are a few sources that may help you in your process. You may or may not use them in your own journaling, they are here to help you.


https://www.stardem.com/emergency_notice/hogan-announces-more-than-175m-for-coronavirus-impacted-businesses/article_a0fea717-42bb-5aa8-a021-845cb997f90a.html


Maryland Governor Issues Stay-at-Home Order as Coronavirus Spreads

By Claire Hansen, Staff Writer  March 30, 2020, at 12:37 p.m.

Maryland Issues Stay-At-Home Order

MARYLAND GOV. LARRY Hogan on Monday issued an executive order directing residents to stay in their homes and for non-essential businesses in the state to close, making Maryland the 27th state in the U.S. to issue such an order in an attempt to stem the spread of the coronavirus.

Residents may only leave their homes for essential reasons like obtaining groceries or medicine, going to the doctor, helping a family member or going to work at certain businesses. Only essential businesses may remain open, and even those must scale down operations and allow for telework as much as possible. Marylanders can also go outside to get fresh air and exercise.
“This virus is spreading rapidly and exponentially,” Hogan said during a press conference Monday, noting that experts predict that, without further action, the area around Washington, D.C., which includes parts of Maryland, could in the near future see an outbreak as severe as the one in New York.

Maryland saw a surge of new cases and fatalities over the weekend, with officials reporting at least 1,413 confirmed coronavirus cases and 15 deaths statewide.

“This is a deadly public health crisis. We are no longer asking or suggesting that Marylanders stay home. We are directing them to do so,” Hogan said.

Anyone found violating the order is subject to a misdemeanor charge, and he or she could face prison time, a fine or both. The order takes effect at 8 p.m. on Monday.

Hogan also said that no Marylander should travel outside the state unless it is absolutely necessary.

Hogan announces more than $175M for coronavirus-impacted businesses

BALTIMORE — Gov. Larry Hogan announced Monday, March 23, Maryland has allocated more than $175 million to assist small businesses and nonprofit organizations impacted by the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Up to $130 million in new funding, through the Maryland Department of Commerce, will help support new loan and grant programs, as well as manufacturers, and $7 million in funding through the Maryland Department of Labor is designed to help small businesses retain their workforce.

“We know that the steps we have taken to protect the health and well-being of all Marylanders have made a significant impact on our business community,” Hogan said. “Today, in addition to funding through the U.S. Small Business Administration, we are making new financial assistance programs available to help our businesses continue to operate during this unprecedented crisis.

“These programs will offer the kind of much-needed support our businesses need right now, and help them to pay bills and retain their workforce as much as possible.”

The Maryland Department of Commerce will offer up to $125 million in loans and grants to small businesses and nonprofits through the Maryland Small Business COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund. A $75 million loan fund and a $50 million grant fund, with $1 million in grants dedicated to non-profits, will provide working capital to be used for payroll, rent, fixed-debt payments and other mission critical cash operating costs. Businesses and nonprofits with under 50 full- and part-time employees will be eligible, and loans will range up to $50,000 and grants up to $10,000.

Maryland Commerce also is working on creating a $5 million fund to incentivize businesses to manufacture personal protective equipment and other supplies to satisfy the increasing needs of the healthcare industry.

The department also has a number of existing financing programs, like Advantage Maryland, which provides conditional loans for new businesses or business expansions; the Maryland Industrial Development Financing Authority and Fund, which provides loan guarantees; the Maryland Small Business Development Financing Authority, which provides financial assistance to economically disadvantaged businesses; and the Non-Profit Interest-Free Micro-Bridge Loan Program, which provides loans to nonprofits to support ongoing operating costs while waiting on a future government grant or contract. A total of about $40 million is available through these existing programs.

Maryland Commerce Secretary Kelly M. Schulz said Monday, “It is our top priority to support our business community as much as we can during this difficult time.”

“We have heard from hundreds of businesses about their greatest need right now which is working capital, and designed these programs to have the most significant impact possible,” Schulz said.

Hogan has allocated $5 million and the Maryland Department of Labor has allocated $2 million to collaboratively launch the COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund. A total of $7 million in funds will be available to provide flexible rapid response services to proactively support businesses and workers undergoing economic stresses due to COVID-19. Funding can help Maryland’s workforce adhere to social distancing policies by purchasing remote access equipment and software to allow employees to work from home, providing
on-site cleaning and sanitation services at businesses who have workers delivering essential services, and implementing other creative strategies to mitigate potential layoffs or closures in the business community.

The department’s Division of Unemployment Insurance is fully operational and remains dedicated to helping both employers and employees who have been affected by COVID-19. Marylanders that have been laid off can immediately file a claim by phone, email, or submit an application online. Maryland does not have a waiting period like many other states do. No matter when or how they file, Marylanders become eligible for benefits starting after the day after they separated from employment.

During this state of emergency, the department will allow workers who have not been terminated to collect unemployment insurance if their employer has been closed due to COVID-19, if they have been quarantined, or if they are caring for a family member who is quarantined. Labor has temporarily waived work search requirements for all current and new unemployment insurance benefit recipients.

Due to an unprecedented volume of inquiries, the Department of Labor also has extended call center hours and added network servers to allow more users to simultaneously file a claim online. Bulk Claims Services are now available for any employers with 25 or more employees who will be impacted by a coronavirus-related layoff or shutdown. For more information, visit mdunemployment.com

“As state and federal governments take unprecedented actions to save the lives of Marylanders during the coronavirus outbreak, the Maryland Department of Labor is here to support and protect our state’s businesses and workforce,” said Maryland Department of Labor Secretary Tiffany Robinson. “Through the new COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund, we look forward to implementing creative strategies to keep Marylanders working and to help businesses continue operations.”

This assistance comes in addition to the U.S. Small Business Administration Economic Injury Disaster Loans, for which Maryland received the designation last week.

The program provides low-interest federal disaster loans for small businesses impacted by the Coronavirus and will help alleviate financial strain and allow businesses to pay bills, payroll, and accounts payable, with long-term payments stretching up to 30 years.

For additional business resources available during the COVID-19 outbreak, visit businessexpress.maryland.gov/coronavirus.

Maryland school closures extended a month due to coronavirus threat
By LIZ BOWIE and LILLIAN REED MAR 25, 2020 | 6:47 PM
Maryland State Superintendent Karen Salmon announced Wednesday that public schools will remain closed through April 24 due to the coronavirus outbreak, leaving open the possibility that students might return if the health emergency abates.

The decision requires school systems to reinvent teaching in weeks, a kind of retooling that would normally take years, and upends the lives of families.

Salmon expects school systems will resume instruction next week, and she promised more information in the coming days on a statewide plan to maintain standards and expectations for every student.

The local superintendents have provided plans to the state on how to continue education services throughout the closure period, Salmon said.

"What I am trying to do is come up with what are the standards ... for what everyone gets. We want to make sure that every student has the basics in the next four weeks," she said.

Salmon said schools systems will be “diligent” in providing education services to students with disabilities during the closure.

Parents who are essential workers will have to find child care, while others will have to learn to work from home while also teaching their children.

Salmon, speaking at a press conference with Gov. Larry Hogan, said day care centers will stay open. The state is opening 1,200 day care slots for school-aged children of essential workers and hopes to find a total of 2,500 in locations such as YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, the Maryland School for the Blind, public libraries, and parks and recreation facilities. Essential workers looking for child care can call a hotline at 877-261-0060.
“While it is too early to definitively say exactly when schools will reopen, we will continue to reassess the situation as we move forward,” Salmon said.

The new order extends the current closure for one month. Salmon, who is the only state official with the legal authority to close schools, first decided with Hogan to close schools for two weeks beginning March 16. That period was to end Monday.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore’s schools are adhering to the schedule for public school closures. Roland Park Country, Gilman, Boys’ Latin and Bryn Mawr schools in Baltimore announced Wednesday night that they too will be closed until at least April 24.

When asked about extending the school year into summer, Salmon said the state will look at “all kinds of creative solutions” in the coming weeks. It is focused first on addressing the continuity of learning, she said.

“None of us can say in four weeks everything is going to be great,” Hogan said. “It’s somewhat aspirational.”

At the press conference, Hogan addressed parents, teachers and students directly.

“There’s a lot of confusion and fear and anxiety and uncertainty right now,” Hogan said. “It’s frustrating and challenging. I just want all of you to know that there’s nothing more important to us than your health and well-being and your education.”

The lessons that Maryland school systems came up with to keep students busy during the initially announced two-week break were not intended to teach students new material, school leaders have said. With the health crisis worsening, school systems began planning last week to switch to remote learning in case schools were closed for a longer period of time.

School officials said they will use laptops, cable television and what online materials they already have to teach students immediately. More sophisticated approaches will likely develop over time. Sonja Santelises, the Baltimore City schools chief, said school superintendents in the region have begun sharing resources and ideas with each other.

But there are multiple looming decisions about whether the state should suspend some graduation requirements for high school seniors, how to provide equity for disadvantaged students, and what can be put in place for students with disabilities.

Even the basics might be hard.

Teaching a child to read without face-to-face interaction will be much more difficult, teachers said.

“Virtual learning can never take the place of in-class learning. It can never replace the chemistry labs, reading circles and all of the arts that really flourish during in-person teaching,” said Cheryl Bost, president of the Maryland State Education Association. While teachers will do everything they can, she said, “it will be important to understand that our students have lost learning.”

What technology is available to students varies across the state. Baltimore County middle and high school students have laptops they already take home. The county also has a significant number of laptops in the elementary grades that could be deployed.

Baltimore City has about one laptop for every four children, and Santelises said her staff has been figuring out how they might give those out in the most equitable way. The system placed orders for some Chromebooks before the coronavirus closure, but they may not arrive until May.

“Given the resource differences, we know that we are going to have to have a variety of options that still include some paper packets. We know that family access to internet varies across the city,” she said, so teachers and school leaders are trying to “really plan creatively.”

For instance, she said, educators are trying to use cell phones, which many families have even if they don’t have Wi-Fi or a laptop.

“Cell phones might seem low tech, but actually they are not,” said Santelises, adding that teachers also can call students.

Despite the degree of invention and improvisation Santelises said she will expect of the city school educators, she said she’s realistic.
“I think right now it is requiring all of us to hold multiple truths and to think as creatively as possible ... I am not relinquishing that time. I don’t think any of us are,” she said.

On the other hand, she said she’s not going to sweep under the rug the reality that the school system will need to come up with some way to accelerate learning next year.

“We will need to have greater urgency around meeting the additional need that this emergency situation is going to present to them and to us,” Santelises said.

Baltimore County has been working on a plan for distance learning that will be shared with students soon, according to spokesman Brandon Oland.

Many parents said they still have more questions than answers.

“Parents are still wrapping their heads about what all of this means,” said Joseph Kane, treasurer of the Parent Community Association of Baltimore. “I think we’ve just got to bring more clarity on how to do this over the next few weeks. While it is crisis mode and we’re all nervous about what’s coming down the pike, I think a lot of people understand how important it is to close schools right now.”

Maryland was only the second state in the nation to close all of its schools, coming minutes after Ohio did. But state leaders have been more cautious in closing schools for an extended period. Kansas became the first state in the nation to close schools for the rest of the academic year on March 18. On Monday, Virginia ordered schools shuttered for the remainder of the school year and North Carolina said it would close until at least May 15.

Bost said she hopes that the state school board will move to suspend some graduation requirements for high school seniors. In normal times, the state requires students to pass a statewide Algebra I and 10th-grade level English test. If students don’t, they must complete a so-called bridge project, which requires them to work with a teacher on the material they failed in the exams.

Career technology students in their senior year also may be at a disadvantage, Bost said, because some are working on industry certifications that have standards they may not be able to meet if they are not in school. Similar questions remain over whether high school students enrolled in community college will be able to get their credits.

Federal education law requires states to give annual reading and math tests in grades three through eight, as well as some grades in high school. Last week, the U.S. Department of Education said states could apply for a waiver from that requirement. The Maryland school board voted Tuesday to apply for a waiver. If granted, this will be the first year in more than two decades that annual tests have not been given in Maryland.

Federal laws also require students with disabilities to get an education, and school systems have been penalized in the past for failing to provide an adequate education for that group of students. For instance, Philadelphia decided that it would not provide remote instruction to any students during the school closure because it could not address the requirements of the law for students with disabilities.

The U.S. Department of Education issued language last weekend to try to encourage school districts to do the best they can for special education students. Salmon made it clear that school systems are expected to teach students with disabilities.

“A lot of the kids with disabilities are going to regress significantly,” said Leslie Margolis, a managing attorney at Disability Rights Maryland.

Parents are not expecting six hours of instruction every day during the closure, Margolis said, but school systems should try as much as possible to address each student’s education plan. When students are back in school, she said, there should be compensation for what has been lost.