



# SERVING SCHOOLS DURING A PANDEMIC

The first step is always to talk with the principal and ask how your church can help. Here are ways that South Carolina churches are encouraging teachers and meeting needs of students.

## TEACHER NEEDS

- Write notes of encouragement for each teacher.
- Consider having your church adopt each teacher and send a note and small gift (\$5-10) once a month.
- Plan to celebrate teacher birthdays throughout the year with a card/small gift.
- Provide snacks or a meal (breakfast or lunch) for teachers during orientation week.
- Pay for a food truck to come in and provide lunch or a treat for teachers. This gives an opportunity to connect with teachers when you cannot go in the building.
- Provide a special treat before or after school: a coffee truck or Kona Ice
- Focus on first year teachers: give personal notes and gift cards to help with room set up (Target, Michaels, Wal-Mart) or treat them with Chick-fil-A, Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts. Sometimes businesses will make donations as well. Don't be afraid to ask! Write notes throughout the year. \*Remember 25% of first year teachers in 2018 did not return in 2019.\*
- Don't forget custodians, meal service providers and bus drivers. They need our encouragement too!
- Fill a "survival kit" bag for each teacher. ([www.positivepromotions.com](http://www.positivepromotions.com) is a great site for bags)
- Ask your principal if they have international teachers who will need assistance. There is great need in this area. Contact Heart4Schools for more information.
- Collect school supplies and include cleaning supplies for teachers.
- Provide hand sanitizer stations in the schools.
- Purchase recess equipment (balls, jump ropes, etc.) since classes will not be sharing.
- Pray for teachers, administrators and staff. Organize a prayer walk. If you cannot do this have a Prayer "Call" and meet over Zoom to pray. Pray for schools during weekly worship services.
- Pray specifically for teachers/staff in your church.



## STUDENT NEEDS

- Many students do not have food to eat when they are at home. Work with your school's guidance counselor or social worker to determine needs and become a Backpack Buddy for children in your community. (Provide a bag of food that will go home with them on Friday for the weekend.)
- During times of great need, some district social workers are collecting food for families. Ask about the needs. Your church could sponsor a food drive.
- When schools are learning virtually, provide childcare/e-learning support for children who would otherwise be left at home while parents work. (Call our office for more details.)
- Be a "hot-spot" for students without internet in their area.
- Collect school supplies for students.
- Provide Christmas presents and food for families who are in need.
- While you cannot enter a school to be a Reading Buddy, consider making recordings of you reading a book on a flash drive and send it to the school in a bag with the book.
- Ask your principal if she would like to have Writing Buddies or Pen Pals for students.
- Be a virtual classroom reader. Does your school have technology to make this happen?
- Continue to gift your Reading Buddies with books to read at home.
- Provide kid-sized face masks for students – especially for those in areas of poverty.
- High School students (especially Seniors) need opportunities to prepare them to be "career ready". Ask the guidance counselor to identify "at risk" students and provide mentoring/job shadowing for these students. Look within your congregation for those with a heart for students and with jobs where shadowing would be permissible.
- Provide meals or snacks for sports teams and become their fan club. Create relationships with the students and parents.
- Offer opportunities for families to meet outside of school. Host a movie night outside at the school or in the neighborhood.
- Pray for students and their families. Do this in an organized way, personally and/or in your church services.

Heart4Schools has a limited number of grants, made possible through the Janie Chapman Missions Offering, that a church may apply for as they respond to needs in a school. The grants are designed to help churches begin new partnerships as well as to help churches with an existing partnership to have a Kingdom Impact in the lives of teachers and students. Churches applying for grants should have an investment in a long-term relationship with their school partner. If you are interested in a grant, email: [angelamcneal@scbaptist.org](mailto:angelamcneal@scbaptist.org).