March 9, 2020

Dear Hastings Families,

Superintendents received more guidance information today relative to procedures for closing schools if the need arises. Below is some additional information to keep you informed and safe.

Guidelines for Long Term Closures
If there is a concern at school, I will consult with our medical director, the New York State Health Department (NYSDoH) and Westchester County Health Department. Districts will be notified by the NYSDoH if a child or staff member tests positive for Coronavirus (COVID-19) and health officials will determine the next steps needed for the school community. If a student or staff member attended our schools prior to being confirmed as a Coronavirus (COVID-19) case, the NYSDoH will require an initial 24-hour closure in order to begin the investigation of the contacts within the school. No school personnel has been tasked with doing this. **To date, the District does not have any confirmed cases among any of its students, parents, or staff.**

Google Classroom for Instructional Materials
Since we use Google as our platform for email, we will use [Google Classroom](#) for teachers to post assignments, materials, and resources. Some teachers in each school already use Google Classroom. Elementary teams will collaborate to create a grade-level Classroom while secondary teachers will either create a grade-level Classroom or individual content specific Classrooms. Information will be shared with you on how to access Google Classroom, especially at the elementary level. We do not use remote learning or distance learning similar to colleges and universities where the instructor delivers instruction through an on-line platform. Our teachers will provide the assignments, materials, and resources but are not required to use Skype or Google Hangout, for example. We’ll await guidance from the New York State Department of Education on what they consider to be distance learning.

Chromebook Access for Students
Today, Principals identified students who do not have a device at home to access Google Classroom. We will be assigning a Chromebook to these students along with a device for internet access.

Providing Breakfast and Lunch for Students
Some students rely upon the free and reduced lunch program available at each school. When we are closed, these children miss out on breakfast and lunch. Maureen Caraballo, the Business
Official and Treasurer, is working with our food service program and local agencies to provide a pick-up or delivery option for families.

March 18 Superintendent’s Conference Day
Based upon the great weather that we have been having, we will be using March 18th as a Superintendent’s Conference Day rather than an instructional day for students. Teachers will have time to develop their Google Classroom to post assignments, materials, and resources.

Cancellation of Large Events & Travel
State and local health officials will notify Districts to close schools and/or cancel large events. As you plan for travel over spring break, please consult the CDC travel FAQs. Some field trips were postponed or canceled last week. We’ll use the guidance provided by State and local health officials.

School Cleaning Regimen
Cleaning surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, and countertops will occur regularly using the guidelines provided by the NYSDoH.

Handwashing and Hand Sanitizers
We have enlisted the help of all adults in the buildings to remind children to wash their hands after the bathroom, before they eat, and after they return from recess. If they can’t make it to the bathroom to wash their hands, they can use the hand sanitizer dispensers which are located in their classrooms, in common spaces such as the library, cafeteria, and gymnasium and in the hallways. Signs will be in full display around the buildings also reminding children of the importance of washing their hands. Students at the secondary level were told to notify the main office or a teacher if they find an empty soap dispenser and missing paper towels in the bathrooms. New York State has given us permission to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are important in containing the virus and not spreading it.

Reliable Sources of Information
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the New York State Department of Health are legitimate sources of information. Phishing emails have shown up. Neither the CDC nor the NYSDoH has any time to randomly email us. To avoid phishing scams, always go directly to their websites.

If you or your children are sick, please stay home. If students are home because they are sick, Principals asked teachers to give students time when they return to school to complete missed assignments or tests.

Throughout the week, I will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available.

Thank you for your patience, calm and understanding during this challenging time. Together, we’ll get through this.

Warm regards,

Valerie Henning-Piedmonte