March 12, 2020

Dear Hastings Families,

Today, the Westchester Superintendents had a conference call with the Interim Commissioner of Education Ms. Shannon Tahoe. We were assured that the New York State Education Department will be issuing guidance to the districts to inform their decision making. Tomorrow morning, the Westchester Superintendents will be meeting with the Chancellor of the Board of Regents, Dr. Betty Rosa, Regent Dr. Fran Wills, Senator Shelley Mayer and the Interim Commissioner of Education Ms. Shannon Tahoe.

Across this region, parents are asking Superintendents to close the schools for an extended period of time. We understand that while our schools were closed for two days last week allowing us to gather information and sanitize our schools, neither the Superintendent nor the Commissioner of Education is authorized to close schools for an extended period of time. The only person who has this authority is the Governor of the State of New York. We hope to get more guidance on this in the coming day and will be in touch as we learn more.

Furthermore, to ensure that teachers have time to work with their teams to populate Google Classroom with assignments, materials, and resources, the March 18th Superintendent’s Conference Day will now take place on Monday, March 16. Students will not come to school—only faculty and staff will be at school on the March 16 Conference Day, and we appreciate your flexibility under these circumstances to understand why we are making this change with little notice to you. Details will be shared with families about how to access Google Classroom afterward.

Ms. Maureen Caraballo is contacting parents about accessing the free or reduced breakfast and lunch program which will be delivered or available for pick up at a central location depending on what is convenient for families.

We recognize and share your concerns and hope that we will have an announcement from the Governor’s Office shortly.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Warm regards,
Valerie Henning-Piedmonte, Superintendent of Schools
Doug Sundheim, President of the Board of Education