



ROCKAWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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MRS. PHYLLIS ALPAUGH
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Rockaway Borough School District Corona Virus Information March 13, 2020

Dear Parents, Students and School Families,

I am reaching out to you regarding our latest response to the Coronavirus. While locally, we have not seen any confirmed cases, we feel it is important to take all necessary precautions to keep our students, their families, our staff and the entire Rockaway Borough community healthy and safe.

With that said, after much consultation with our local Health officials, the Board of Education, and the regional sending district Superintendents, **we have decided to close the district schools effective Monday March 16th through Friday March 27th** to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. While today will be the last day for students, district staff will utilize one or more of their non-instructional days (our remaining snow days) to transition to our online learning platform and then begin instruction for students thereafter. Towards the end of the designated two-week closure period, we will reassess to see if re-opening the schools will be feasible. **Please note, Parent Teacher Conferences for today, March 13th, have not been cancelled and will take place as scheduled. Also while the buildings are closed, there will be no BoroKids services.**

This decision to close schools follows recent guidance from the Department of Education that invited districts to develop and submit an implementation plan for distance learning should closure become necessary to protect the public health. In essence, this guidance has provided us the flexibility on the 180-day requirement statute allowing schools to close, but also to ensure continuity of instruction for its students while receiving credit for the school days.

In preparation for this closure and in response to NJ DOE guidelines, we have created a distance-learning plan in which the delivery of instruction will be a combination of varied online learning as well as traditional paper and pencil practice based on grade level and availability of resources as determined through our recent Tech Survey. These days are not intended to supplant our regular school day instruction, but rather help schools support the much-needed continuity in learning when an emergency such as this arises. While we in the Borough feel keeping students engaged during this challenging time is important, it is equally important regarding the circumstances, to be flexible and understanding regarding expectations for students, their families and our staff as we all will have many challenges in the weeks to come.

While the actual online learning module will be ready for instructional purposes by early next week, here are few key points for your reference with more detailed information to follow:

- Daily and weekly lesson plans will be posted on our district website via a Google Doc. Each day will contain directions and links for instruction along with necessary resources for core academic subjects like English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies along with grade level Specials and required supplementary instruction. These templates will be accessible by teachers, students, and parents, and updated when needed.

- Lessons will be differentiated to meet the needs of all students with our regional Child Study Team providing appropriate materials and resources for students with individual IEPs. Differentiated materials will also be available for our English Language learners, at risk students, as well as Gifted and Talented students.
- Out of district students will be transported to their placements provided those schools remain open.
- The instructional day in general will be abbreviated and focus on the practice and remediation of already acquired skills.
- Tech support will also be in place to assist those with issues.
- Students will be required to log in each day, as attendance will be taken through Google classroom. Students, who do not participate, will be considered absent.
- Teachers will be monitoring student work and be available online daily during designated virtual “office hours” for consultation (8:30am-1:30pm with an hour for lunch from 11:30am-12:30pm). Grade level teachers will work as a team unit so in case of a staff emergency, students and their families will always have people to contact. Support staff will also be available to support teachers and the overall delivery of instruction.
- Besides our teachers, our counselors, therapists, nurses, and administration will also be available for consultation via our district email. Voicemails left on school phone accounts will be accessible to staff through their emails. If permitted by the local Health officials, Central Office will keep abbreviated office hours.
- Students receiving Free and Reduced lunch will be able to pick up boxed lunches provided by Pomptonian, our cafeteria food service at Thomas Jefferson School. Move information will follow regarding the exact time schedule.

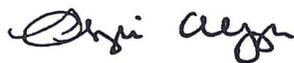
As an additional measure today, we are sending students home with some supplementary instructional materials that has been slated for part of our distance learning curriculum as well as encouraging them to take home devices, chargers, musical instruments or anything else they may want or need while we are closed. Also to ensure all Thomas Jefferson students will be able to take advantage of online learning, we are sending home individual Chromebook devices for all our 4th and 5th grade students. If you are a grade level parent, please take note of the 1:1 materials as we ask you to review the responsibilities of using a school device at home.

Updated communications will be posted periodically via our district website (www.rockboro.org), sent out through K-12 alerts and our Constant Contact platform. In addition, administration in each building will be available on Monday March 16th from 4:00-6:00pm so students can pick up any additional instructional or personal materials.

In final note, many thanks to you all for your continued support and understanding regarding this very challenging and potentially unprecedented situation. More importantly, please know that we are here for you and your children, and are committed to do what’s best for the Borough and the safety of all concerned.

Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely yours,



Phyllis Alpaugh
Superintendent