

FROM THE DESK OF *Phyllis Alpaugh*

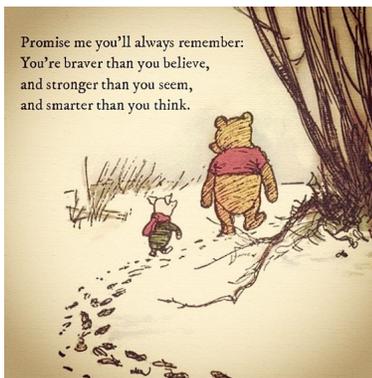


SUPERINTENDENT'S NEWSLETTER

Rockaway Borough Schools
May 2020

WHILE OUR BUILDINGS ARE CLOSED, PROGRESS MOVES FORWARD REGARDING OUR REFERENDUM PROJECTS

[CLICK HERE TO GET AN UPDATE ON HOW THE DISTRICT IS CONTINUING TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE REFERENDUM](#)



Promise me you'll always remember:
You're braver than you believe,
and stronger than you seem,
and smarter than you think.

Dear Parents and Families,

Well the announcement we have been waiting for, but also dreading came from the Governor's office this past week, confirming what many of us believed would be the inevitable, that all schools in New Jersey would remain closed for the rest of the current school year. While this is so disappointing for both students and staff alike, it is inevitably what must happen to assure the safety of all concerned. It is our hope that by staying home now, we can all return safe and sound in the future.

As we move forward, there are a plethora of concerns and issues to address whether it involves the closing out of this current school year, the celebration of our graduating students and others, or the very precarious planning for a possible return in September. While the world we live in has so rapidly changed from just a few months ago, please be assured as we plan our course of action we will keep the safety of students, staff and their families as our number one priority by meeting your needs, but also following the guidance of local, county and state officials. With every step, we will continue to keep you informed so continue to check our website regularly for updated information and communications.

Finally, and most importantly, please know we are here for you and, that together we will get through this because as Winnie the Pooh says...we are BRAVER, STRONGER AND SMARTER than we think. And you know, that means a lot!

Please stay healthy and safe.
Phyllis Alpaugh

This issue's FEATURED ARTICLE...

Dealing with the New Normal



Back in mid-March, when we closed schools overnight, and districts like our own announced that learning and instruction would continue virtually, most of us, educators included, had an idea of what that was, or what it could look like, but in reality, were not exactly sure how it would roll out. It was a learning process for us all and one we thought quite frankly, might be rather short lived. Now 7-8 weeks into the cycle, thanks to the tremendous efforts of teachers, students and their families, we have all hopefully gotten the hang of Distance learning or at least become familiar with the concept, the daily routines and the platforms, so education could continue during the health crisis.

But in a short amount of time, educators soon came to realize that there was much more to consider than just academics when it comes to distance learning especially during a very complicated and unprecedented, health related pandemic. With mandated stay at home and social distancing directives, students, teachers and their families found themselves quarantined, isolated and removed from their normal everyday existences. For now the new normal does not include school, or baseball, or dance, or piano lessons, or even playing at the park. All these things combined with the dramatic changes occurring in the economy, not seeing our friends or families, and of course, the growing spread of the virus and its deadly effects, has caused much anxiety even in the most stable households. That is why more than ever we need to look at the whole picture and of course, the needs of the whole child and their family.

So here are some tips to help you address the aspects of distance learning that extend beyond the virtual classroom, but certainly can impact the daily lives of your child(ren) and your family during this quarantine time at home. I have compiled them from a variety of sources and experts, so take them for what they are worth, but hopefully they will provide you with some viable suggestions, some practical advice, and a little more support during this very difficult time.

Everyday Tips for Coping During the Pandemic

Establish daily routines

- Structure both learning and recreation experiences
- Try to eat family meals together on a regular basis
- Make healthy choices about the foods you eat in general
- Keep regular bedtimes as well as morning wake up times

Incorporate exercise into your daily routine:

- Get up and move everyday
- If possible take advantage of the outdoors
- Schedule leisure activities for everyone
- Encourage regular recess time during distance learning times

Bolster life skills along with book learning

- Teach children to cook, clean and care for themselves
- Find ways to practice executive function skills like working memory, flexible thinking and self-control
- Focus on transferring academic skills to real life situations

Stay connected with others

- Make sure children are staying in touch with school staff and classmates
- Schedule virtual play dates
- Encourage connections with family members and friends, both near and far
- Connect to the community at large and let others know that you care and appreciate them and their efforts

Address children's fears

- Answer questions simply and honestly
- Recognize and acknowledge their feelings
- Model how to manage feelings
- Monitor their exposure to the news and the press
- Don't be afraid to show affection

Stay positive

- Savor small moments
- Look for the good in others
- Give yourself and others a break
- Try to look at each challenging situation as a learning moment
- Always focus on moving forward and the future

AND most importantly, if needed, don't be afraid to ask for help, guidance and assistance as your district staff is here to support you and your family during this New Normal.

[Click here for a Simple Guide on How to Talk to Your Child about the Coronavirus](#)

ROCKAWAY BOROUGH SCHOOLS www.rockboro.org



Let's Stay Connected--Click here for district contact information