



April 1, 2020

To the Byram Hills School Community,

I hope that your family and extended family are doing well and that your children are adapting to the changes that our world is facing. Indeed, these are challenging times, but these circumstances bring the value of family and community to the forefront of our minds - keeping us strong, comforted, and inspired. We are now in the third full week of e-learning, a new and evolving environment for all. Building principals will update families weekly about information specific to their buildings, and Dr. Tim Kaltenecker, Deputy Superintendent, will be sharing a video in the coming days on the District's planned trajectory for that learning. In this email I hope to share an overview of our progress to date, expectations as we continue along this path, and notes about mandatory changes to the scheduled spring recess.

E-Learning

Many steps are being taken to update our e-learning plan each day. We have offered nearly 100 workshops over two weeks to train teachers in new technology and methods of instructional design in online and home learning. The District is evaluating and purchasing new online content delivery platforms and other online tools in addition to what we already have, and we continue to consider appropriate screen time for children and internet safety and privacy.

As each day progresses, you will see:

- All teachers are connecting with their students, including email, phone contact, synchronous or asynchronous methods.
- At the 3-5 level, each classroom teacher will communicate with students through their own Google Classroom where students will receive the expectations for their learning. The K-2 e-learning environment is shifting to Google classroom. Instruction will be provided to students through assignments and the monitoring of their progress. Students will receive feedback and be able to ask questions. Teachers are training to use a digital component of our new math program, evaluating new digital literacy tools, providing academic support services, and reviewing other content area curriculum.
- At the middle school and high school levels, teachers currently offer synchronous help sessions to provide feedback and reteach content to meet individual student learning needs and they continue to revise and rewrite the curriculum for home learning. Teachers continue to learn more tools to make instruction interactive for students and evaluate the curricular priorities as NYS and the College Board update testing requirements. Teachers are recommending time schedules to guide students with how to structure time and are also increasing the quantity of student work. The administration is reviewing how to avoid conflicting synchronous session times.

We encourage families to reach out to classroom teachers or building administration should you have specific questions about your child's needs.

Attendance

It is important that parents continue to email attendance secretaries for students who will be absent from doing assignments each day. This is required in our state reporting for school aid.

Extended School Closure

The directive contained in Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.11 related to the closure of schools statewide provides that all schools shall remain closed until April 15, 2020, at which time the continued closure shall be re-evaluated. Of course, the District will communicate plans from the Governor as that time approaches. For those who are receiving meals through the District, food distribution will continue as well as childcare for emergency responders.

Spring Recess Changes

In accordance with Governor Cuomo's Executive Order, teachers will continue to work remotely with their students during the previously scheduled spring recess next week. Please note, in observance of religious holidays at the end of the week, that from Wednesday evening, April 8th through Friday, April 10th teachers will be providing independent learning opportunities for students for continuity of instruction and will be available by email. The District respects that independent work and communication will be adjusted on those days depending upon the religious observances in each household.

We wish our families and students a good week ahead.

Jen Lamia, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools