

March 13, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Staff:

I'd like to express my thanks for your support during this time of uncertainty. I appreciate your emails, your thoughts, and your concerns as we navigate our way through our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I have consulted with local health officials, Department of Education officials, Middlesex County superintendents, and others in order to arrive at the most responsible decisions and course of action for the students and families in our school district.

Currently, I am unaware of any cases of COVID-19 in the Piscataway Community. But as the situation changes hourly, and in light of recent National Institutes of Health recommendations for social distancing and Governor Murphy's recommended cancelling of all events that include over 250 people, we will close all Piscataway Schools beginning at 7:00 PM today. Schools will remain closed until Monday, March 23. All classes, athletics, extra-curriculars, and outside events are also cancelled. We will reassess before March 20 and keep you informed of all decisions moving forward.

Please note: Monday, March 16 will be a snow day. Therefore, there will be no school responsibility on that day. Remote/Virtual Instruction will begin on Tuesday, March 17, and continue all week. Here are our plans to date to keep our students learning:

Delivery of Instruction:

District administrators have put together meaningful plans for all grade levels. **These plans will go live on the district and school websites on Tuesday morning, March 17, accessible through a newly created main navigation button labeled "Remote/Virtual Instructional Plan."**

Detailed directions and plans are attached. These directions will answer your frequently asked questions.

- We will provide hard copy packets of instructional plans for families who need or prefer information in that format, and will provide information about pick-up locations on Monday.
- Teachers will be available by email during the school day to answer questions and provide assistance.

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Special Education:

Special education teachers will contact parents of students with personalized learning plans – either via email or through Schoology – to continue their individual plans.

Guidance:

Our guidance counselors will also be available during the school day via email.

Meals:

The district is working with Sodexo and our transportation department to serve meals to students currently receiving free or reduced meals. Detailed instructions will be sent out on Monday, March 16.

During remote/virtual instruction, school principals, other administrators, and secretaries will be available in every school during school hours. Please contact your child’s school with any questions.

REMOTE/VIRTUAL INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

The Piscataway School District is committed to providing an equitable and rigorous education for our students. In the event of a school closure, teachers and staff members will continue their job responsibilities remotely. Transitioning to an online and remote instructional platform will be an adjustment for everyone. However, minimizing the disruption to student learning is our priority.

To ensure the continuity of instruction, a proactive plan has been prepared and can be found on our district site (piscatawayschools.org) under the tab “*Remote/Virtual Instructional Plan.*” You may also go to your child’s school webpage to access the plan. In the event of a closing, this plan will be available by 9:00am on the 1st day of this instruction.

Once you have accessed the tab, you will find grade clusters (Preschool, Elementary School, Intermediate School, Middle School, and High School). Inside the clusters you will find the following for PreK-Grade 12:

- Subject area folders.
- Interdisciplinary/thematic projects and/or similar modes of instruction with directions for daily objectives/expectations.
- The usage of email and Schoology daily by the teachers for discussion questions along with monitoring and assessing student progress.
- Schoology and email will be used for communication between teachers, students and parents.
- Teachers will be available during normal school hours and will respond to student or parent questions or concerns within 30 minutes via Schoology or email.
- Properly leveled assignments for Special Education students will be communicated via email (Elementary) and Schoology/email (Intermediate, Middle and High School). Paper-based materials for self-contained students will also be available.

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- Details for the submission of work will be provided in the directions by the teacher.
- If you have multiple children and a limited number of technology devices, know that there is no expectation on the number of hours a student needs to work. The expectation is that they daily complete the outlined objectives/expectations. Students can complete and submit work anytime throughout that day.
- A link for NJSLA practice material.
- A link will be provided for Technical Support which will include Tip Sheets.

In order for all students to have access to curriculum during an extended absence, paper-based materials have been prepared for those without access to technology. Centralized pickup locations will be made available and will entail the following:

- The locations and hours of operation will be announced by the school district via a Honeywell email message.
- A limited amount of hard copies (printed assignments with directions) will be available for appropriate subject areas.
- Computers and printers will be available for parents to print out the appropriate assignments for their children.
- Opportunities will be made available for parents to email their child's teacher and/or principal if necessary.
- The locations will be for curriculum resources only and not for student services.

We are not being directed by the Health Department to close our schools, but we feel the potential outbreak warrants this closure.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work together to provide a top quality education for students during these challenging times. We truly appreciate the support of all Piscataway families and we pledge to keep you updated of all developments.

Sincerely,



Dr. Frank Ranelli
Superintendent of Schools