

Supt's Message: 4/14/20

Dear Families and School Community,

Although many of our traditional Passover Seders and Easter Masses turned virtual this past week, it is my hope that many of us were able to find ways to connect with those we love. Like so many of you, I shared the occasion online with my children and their families. Although this was not as much fun or satisfying as past gatherings, we celebrated our good health and future hopes. For those not celebrating these holidays, I hope the spring sunshine contributed to your feelings of well-being and renewal.

It was most unfortunate that the NYC Mayor and NYS Governor became verbal sparring partners on Saturday over the issue of school closure through June versus the resumption of school before year's end. Nevertheless, let me try to make some sense of it. The Mayor is concerned about the trauma children have experienced and he worries that with the virus still circulating among us, schools will be forced to close as COVID-19 emerges in our schools and we must close on a rolling basis in order to conduct contact tracing and cleaning. He sees this as causing ongoing disruption and trauma. As you know, both the NYC Mayor and the Nassau County Executive ordered schools closed on March 16 respectively; the Governor closed them afterwards, beginning March 18. The Governor is very measured in his approach. He prefers to gather information from not only NYS stakeholders but regional partners. He believes it is premature to make a sweeping decision given the data and science at this point in time. He recognizes that data changes daily, research regarding medical testing and treatments could emerge in the near-future, and coordination with other systems might facilitate a re-opening plan. This is why he prefers to take a two- to three-week approach to decision-making. Regardless of what the NYC Mayor or our County Executive decides, we are under the Governor's Executive Order and we are within his purview; thus, it is his decision that determines when classroom instruction in FXH and LOMS will resume.

Last week, the State Education Department released a memo cancelling the June 2020 administration of the NYS High School Regents Examination Program in response to the statewide closures of schools and districts to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is available at:

<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/coronavirus/nysed-covid-19-memo-cancellation-june-2020-regents-exams.pdf>

This memo has implications for our eighth grade students who were planning to take the Living Environment [Science] Regents and/or Algebra 1 [Math] Regents. I want to emphasize that although the exams will not be administered and factored into the final grade as usual, it is all the more important that students complete the course assignments to the best of their ability in order to receive high school credit(s) for the year.

Similarly, the district will exempt the requirement for all eighth graders to pass the locally developed Languages Other than English (LOTE) Spanish Checkpoint A examination in June. Again, as long as students continue working on their Spanish language assignments with due diligence, they will receive one year of high school credit.

Rest assured, our intention is to support our students and provide for their success in all ways possible. To this end, we are also in communication with our partners at Long Beach Public Schools for the benefit of students in both communities—this school year and in the future.

I want you to be aware that the Department of Labor recently passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). This provides sick leave or expanded family and medical leave under certain conditions to employees affected by the virus. It is available at:

https://www.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/media-assets/FFCRA_Poster_WH1422_Non-Federal.pdf

Finally, I have been following the County Executive's website regarding active cases of the virus in Nassau County, with specific attention to Island Park (Village), Harbor Isle, and Barnum Island while also glancing at the numbers for Long Beach and Oceanside. If interested, be sure to enlarge the map so you can find each of our three areas after you access it at:

<https://nassau-county.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/3545ec3d3a3e4ac1babe7d4714fedb56>

My best wishes for you and your family's continued well-being.

Stay strong, stay spirited, stay healthy!

Dr. Rosmarie Bovino

Superintendent of Schools