

May 8, 2020

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Last Friday, Governor Cuomo announced that he would be extending the school closure through the remainder of the 2019 – 2020 school year. When I heard the news, I was sitting in my dining room (which is currently serving as my “Principal’s Office”) and I couldn’t believe the news. I always held out some hope that everyone would be back at Lincoln Orens Middle School, working together to help our students accomplish wonderful achievements. Unfortunately, we will not be able to come together in person, but we are working on different ways to keep many of our traditions for this school year, nevertheless. More information will be forthcoming about this in the weeks ahead.

With the news of the school closure for the remainder of the year, some of our students may be feeling stressed. If you notice any of the following behavior changes and feel your child is becoming overwhelmed or stressed, please contact one of our mental health professionals: Mrs. Janofsky, Ms. Kunz, or Mrs. Porzelt. Look for the following behavior changes:

1. Excessive worry or sadness
2. Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
3. Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens
4. Avoiding school work
5. Difficulty with attention and concentration
6. Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past

Last week, I discussed The Community of Inquiry theoretical framework; in particular, the students’ online social presence. With the school closure extended, it is imperative that our students begin to build upon their online social presence in new and meaningful ways. All of the teachers at Lincoln Orens Middle School have regularly scheduled Google Meets which will help our students build their online social presence. These Google Meets allow for students to interact in a supervised, virtual meeting with decorum where they can practice conversation, turn-taking, and the sharing of ideas that will lay the groundwork for future virtual group work. The purpose of these virtual meetings now are for the students to begin building trust among their peers and to share their ideas and thoughts without fear of rejection. They are meant to help them increase their capacity to reflect on what is said, to temper impromptu reactions that do not move conversation forward, and to refrain from dominating the social virtual space in ways that diminish the importance of others and what they have to say. In addition to learning protocols for engaging in conversation, the chat function and use of emoji reactions, among other built-in Google Meet tools are being explored and incorporated. Please encourage your child to attend their Google Meets.

With this Sunday being Mother’s Day, I would like to wish all our Lincoln Orens’ Moms a very happy Mother’s Day.

Bruce Hoffman, Ed.D.
Principal