



Building Bridges for today's students to cross into tomorrow's world with equity, innovation and optimism

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James J. Montesano, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

Today marks a historic day as we began a new form of education for students in America's schools. I hope your child experienced some positive learning outcomes and enjoyed this new method of schooling. I want to thank you, your children and our staff for partnering together as we begin this new untested endeavor. Like each of you at home, all of us in the Nyack Schools are committed to doing our very best to meet the needs of our students. I am writing to provide you with some important updates and advise that we are all operating in a rapidly changing environment. We will continue to provide updates to you as new information is received from our Governor's Office, Commissioner of Education and Department of Health. I am on daily conference calls with State officials and communicating closely with the Superintendents in Rockland County and Nyack School Administration to share information and ways we can better serve our students.

- **Nyack Educational Continuity Plan**

All of our parents should have received a copy of our Educational Continuity Plan. Our staff has prepared subject/course specific instructional activities for each of our grade levels K-12. Teachers are available for students between 9:30am-12noon Monday – Friday and will be using time each day to prepare additional lesson materials. If you need assistance in locating this information please contact your Building Principal. A Technology Help Desk has been established for District issued devices that may be accessed by calling (845) 353-7075.

- **Concerns Regarding 180-School Day Requirements**

Our schools are closed through March 31st by Executive Order of Governor Cuomo. It is anticipated that this Executive Order will be reissued and will extend beyond March 31. Parents will be advised when/if such order is issued and we ask parents to prepare for an extended closure period. The Governor's order required all NYS schools to submit a plan to address Student Instruction, Food Services for Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible Students, and Child Care for Emergency Responders/Health Providers during the period of closure. Our District has submitted its plan and it is our understanding, upon approval, that school closure days from March 18-March 31 will count towards the 180-day requirement. We are currently planning to hold to our scheduled spring recess, April 9-17. Again, this is not confirmed and will be based on a number of factors.

- **Confirmed COVID-19 Test Results within School Community**

I have spoken with officials from the Rockland County Department of Health several times over the past several days. The Department of Health (DOH) is responsible for tracking and reporting COVID-19 cases and advising school districts of the need to contact members of the school community, to self-quarantine or for testing. I have been advised that one of our staff members at Liberty Elementary School tested positive for COVID-19. This information did not come to us from DOH, but rather the staff member reporting to the District. In addition, a Central Office staff member has been hospitalized with symptoms related to COVID-19; however, there has been no confirmation of a positive test result. Both of these cases have been reported to DOH who advised

that it is likely additional cases will be reported with each passing day. They stressed for all of us to continue to be vigilant, stay at home wherever possible, practice social distancing and good hygiene. Our disclosure of this information regarding members of our staff is driven entirely by our commitment to be transparent with you around this public health crisis. We will continue to directly communicate with you regarding health concerns that may impact our staff and students.

- **Access to School Buildings, Playgrounds and Fields**

We recognize students may have belongings in school that may be needed during this school closing period. Students that need to pickup medicine, equipment or other items of importance may make arrangements by emailing their school Principals. Health officials have asked that we communicate to our communities the importance of practicing social distancing. It has been reported that within the County, groups of young adults and children have been seen playing basketball games, gathering on playgrounds and other group related activities. Please be advised that during this health crisis the playgrounds and ball fields located on school property will not be open to groups. We ask for your assistance in keeping everyone safe and healthy.

- **School Meals Program**

The Nyack Schools have applied and received approval to continue the Federal Child Nutrition Program during this current health crisis. Breakfast and lunch are being made available at the Nyack Center (9:30am-12 noon) Monday-Friday and at Waldron Terrace from 10am-11am Monday-Friday. The Nyack Schools are appreciative of Kim Cross and her staff along with the countless volunteers who are assisting to ensure our students have access to healthy meals each day. Please inform us if you are aware of any students who may have difficulty accessing school meals at these locations.

- **Local/State/National Assessments**

There are many unanswered questions regarding Gr. 3-8 Testing, NYS Regents Exams, SAT Testing, Advanced Placement Testing and other important assessments. I can only share at this time that NYSED and the Acting Commissioner of Education are working on these concerns and we will make this information available to you as it is received.

- **Guidance Counselor Webpage**

This is clearly a stressful time for families and our students may be in need of assurance and support as they adjust to this change in their daily routines. Our Guidance Department is providing resources that may be of interest to you to support your children. You can access this information on your school webpages under the area of Guidance.

In closing, we recognize these are challenging times for our students, staff, families and loved ones. Please offer your support to one another and especially those that may need greater assistance. I look forward to working together with you and wish you and your families good health and that you enjoy this opportunity to spend time with one another.

Sincerely,



James J. Montesano, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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