



Clark Public Schools

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March 14, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We very recently received information regarding a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a Garwood resident. Due to HIPAA regulations, additional information on the individual cannot be released. The Westfield Regional Health Department has immediately begun an investigation of the case and will be in contact with Nancy Raymond, the Clark Health Officer, should additional contact tracing need to be conducted. We continue to be in close communication with the Clark Township Health Department, and I am glad to report that our community has no confirmed cases.

Moreover, the New Jersey Department of Education provided an update to school districts throughout the state last night that the school closing requirement was being adjusted. The prior *directive* from the local health department was softened to become *in collaboration and consultation with the local health agency*. As a result, we are now in a position to close our schools in response to the coronavirus without jeopardizing our satisfaction of the 180-day state requirement. This closure is being put into place to be preventive. The Clark Public Schools will be closing effective Monday, March 16 through Friday, April 3. The situation will be evaluated on a weekly basis.

As a reminder, each of our teachers has access to a Genesis class page that they can communicate with parents and/or students through. That page can be linked to Google Classroom or the Remind app. Directions to, for instance, more traditional textbook work can also be posted on the Genesis page. We are advising our teachers to follow whichever approach (e.g., Google Classroom, the Remind app, or a more traditional approach) that they would adhere to under more typical circumstances. With that being said, all parents/guardians are being directed to those Genesis class pages as the initial point of contact with our teachers for the sake of consistency across the district.

At the elementary school level, all teachers will be available for remote instruction each school day from 8:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. and then again from 12:45 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. In other words, those are the times that are being set aside each day for our teachers to communicate with parents and students via, for example, email exchanges. For any other emails outside of those time frames, please expect a more typical response time. We are restricting our grades K-5 direct instruction at this time to language arts and mathematics due to the interdisciplinary nature of those curricula. The teachers of our special areas, i.e., academic enrichment, art, computers, gifted and talented, music, physical education, and STEAM, will be using their Genesis class pages to post websites for their students to explore. They will also be available by email during those time frames. Due to the nature of this situation, we are asking our families to help support the remote instruction. For instance, kindly check the Genesis class pages and then assist your children with the work as needed. Please expect your children to be responsible for approximately two hours of work in total per day, and email the teacher if a student is ill and unable to meet a deadline.

At the middle and high school levels, our teachers will be available for remote instruction during their typical class meeting times. In other words, those are the times that are being set aside each day for our teachers to communicate with their students and parents around the coursework via, for example, email exchanges. For any other emails outside of those class meeting times, please expect a more typical response time. A CHK student has eight academic class periods per day, and each day he/she will have 25 minutes of work for each of these



eight periods. ALJ will continue to follow an A/B block schedule during this time. An ALJ student has eight instructional blocks over the course of every two days, so he/she will have 50 minutes of work for each of these eight blocks every other day. Please email the teacher if a student is ill and unable to meet a deadline.

The School Counseling Department will continue to provide support for our students during this time. We remain strongly committed to helping support your child(ren)'s social and emotional needs. Our counseling staff will also be available via email. Please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Andrew Amendola, our Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services/School Counseling; a school counselor; or Mr. Steven Kaelblein, our Student Assistance Coordinator (SAC) at any time for a non-emergency situation. However, if you or someone that you know is in crisis and needs immediate help, please contact 911 or call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) to be connected with a trained counselor at the nearest suicide crisis center. Our School Counseling Department will not be available for crisis situations or consultations during this time.

The National Association of School Psychologists has put together a parent resource, [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#). This link may be helpful and can be adapted for all ages. Information is rapidly changing about this new virus, and so as to have the most up-to-date information, we can stay informed by accessing [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Website](#).

Our Special Services Department will be in communication regarding related services for our students who receive such services. In addition, our school nurses will be available through email.

All school activities, including athletics, our before/aftercare program, and field trips, are being suspended during the closure.

We will have office hours for families who have technology-related needs. If your family has such a need, please visit the ALJ Instructional Media Center (IMC) on Monday evening (March 16) from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. or Tuesday morning (March 17) from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. so that we can get you the needed equipment.

Beginning this Friday (March 20), lunches will be delivered to the homes of our students who participate in the free/reduced lunch program. So as to be as least intrusive as possible, these grab-and-go lunches, prepared by Maschio's, our food services company, will be dropped off at the front doors of our families' homes each day sometime between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Again, thank you for your cooperation and flexibility during this time. I plan to provide you with an update at the end of this coming week. For those of you who emailed me and I have yet to respond, please know that I have been spending my time dealing with this situation. Kindly take this letter as my response. Should you have any further questions or concerns, please reach back out to me. Stay well and safe!

Yours sincerely,

Edward Grande

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