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POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL

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March 12, 2020

Dear Pocantico Families-

Please allow me to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support of our students, staff and educational community as a whole during this “interesting” time. The manner that you have responded to this global issue has helped to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of our students in a thoughtful, calm and appropriate manner. In short, thanks for being great!

While there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our school district at this point, it is my fear that it is just a matter of time before we take our turn and are faced with a closure; as either a result of a case or a close contact. To this end, the Governor has declared that if a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, NYS mandates that a 24-hour school closure take place to allow health officials to assess the situation and to provide further guidance. Additionally, this also provides the district with the opportunity to conduct a deep cleaning of the entire school. As you are aware, in addition to our established protocols, Pocantico now conducts a deep cleaning every weekend. This helps to keep us all safe and ensures that the campus is disinfected and ready for students and staff come Monday. While closures and quarantines of this nature are directed by the DOH, it does not preclude our ability to respond to a situation; absent guidance of the DOH, NYSED or state government. We will do what is necessary to keep everyone safe.

In the event that we have to close for a prolonged period of time, we are prepared to provide home based instruction. We have the best staff members and they have been working to create assignments, compile materials and develop instructional strategies that will help to ensure our students’ academic well-being. Tomorrow, Mr. Brown will post an outline of what this will look like and our teachers will follow up with specific grade/class level instructions. I am very proud of the manner that our staff has worked together to make this happen!

In order to help slow the spread of the virus, the NYS Health Department and our local health professionals are recommending “social distancing”. Social distancing reduces physical contact and proximity between people. To this end, Pocantico is taking some proactive measures to help ensure the safety of our students and staff while at the same time recognizing the importance of experiential learning. As an example, all our campus activities are being suspended, re-scheduled or provided in a different format. We are actively re-scheduling important out of school experiences to later in the year, in the hope that additional time will still allow us to offer these events in a safe manner. Staff are kept on campus and educational partners are “back mapped,” to make sure that they have not had risk of exposure in another district.

Finally, we are strongly advocating for our students, staff and communities! We are in contact and working with respective state and local agencies on a daily basis demanding support for our students and action from our state government. If you have not already done so, I would urge you to contact your elected officials and strongly express your concerns.

For your reference I have updated the Q&A section [here](#). Among other things please view the updated CDC travel regulations, as well as be reminded of the hygienic protocols that will help to keep us all well.

My best regards and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions,

Rich

