

March 27, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Thank you for your ongoing support during these unprecedented times. The COVID-19 outbreak and actions at the local and state level are continually evolving. We will continue to update our community periodically throughout this situation. At this time, we have the following updates to share:

(1) When are we going to go back to school? Under the new timeline, school would reopen at the earliest on April 7 for two days to allow school administrators, teachers, and other staff time to prepare classrooms, set up cafeterias, schedule transportation and arrange other business operations. Students would return to school on April 9, unless extending the closure is needed in response to the situation with the virus. There are no other definitive answers on calendars. We know that there is a spring break scheduled during the proposed return to school. We will work to get further guidance on this issue as that date gets closer. Rest assured, when we know more information, we will share it.

(2) Are we going to take standardized tests? The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) announced the cancellation of statewide assessments for the 2019-2020 school year, which includes the PSSA, PASA, and Keystone Exams.

(3) Are we going to have Continuity of Education? Continuity of Education is the overarching term for any educational practices that occur in the event of a prolonged school closure. It is important that students have the opportunity to develop and maintain skills while away from the customary school environment. This can be achieved through Planned Instruction, Enrichment and Review or a combination thereof.

1. Planned Instruction: Planned Instruction is formal teaching and learning similar to that which occurs in a classroom setting. Within this process, teachers use planned courses of instruction of new concepts/skills aligned to grade level standards.

2. Enrichment and Review: Enrichment and Review consists of informal activities that reinforce or extend students' prior learning. New standards and skills are not addressed through Enrichment and Review.

The Pottsville Area School District will implement Enrichment and Review with the intent to provide a good faith effort to help ensure students receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The Pottsville Area School District shall provide written notice to the parent/guardian of each student who receives services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of the school's plan for ensuring each student receives a FAPE as required under IDEA. If the annual IEP date of a student's education plan is approaching, staff from the Pottsville Area School District will contact each parent/guardian to discuss the annual IEP.

With the school closure being extended up until the end of the day on April 6, 2020, our administrators and teachers will continue to explore all types of learning options and communication methods. Teachers will begin to safely reach out to students through these flexible means during this period for enrichment, review, and just to touch base. This time period will be nothing more than communication and a slow methodical rollout of an enrichment and review plan for students.

If the closure is ultimately extended beyond our spring break, our moving target is to be operating in a fully functioning enrichment and review plan moving forward. We will attempt to work through the obstacles in order to offer educational services to all of our students.

The Pottsville Area School District has not received direction regarding graduation, promotion, or retention as of right now. Also, the hall that was to host the senior prom canceled the prom based on the current CDC guidelines. We cannot say at this point whether or not that will be rescheduled. That decision will depend on the guidelines provided by the CDC, federal and state governments.

We thank you for your continued support.

STAY SAFE!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeffrey S. Zwiebel

Dr. Jeffrey S. Zwiebel
Superintendent