



March 20, 2020

Dear Parents,

I push out this correspondence as the halls and classrooms of Deane-Porter and Forrestdale School are empty, but the pathways of the world-wide web are filled with our students learning and teachers instructing. These are unprecedented times in education! Generations of the past are too familiar with the navigation of historical incidents like the Great Depression, World Wars, 9/11, and Hurricane Sandy and now today's generation will reflect on this time in similar ways due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Effective Tuesday, March 17, 2020 the Rumson School District sadly closed its doors and classroom instruction began virtually. Over the week prior to the closure our teachers and staff continued to deliver services to students in school while building this virtual platform for teaching and learning. Ultimately, they built the plane while flying it! I am truly proud of what they have put together for the first two weeks.

So what happens moving forward? For the first two weeks of virtual instruction I have asked teachers to be cautious about moving forward with the learning of new topics. With uncertainty in the effectiveness of such instruction it is better that we use this new form of teaching and learning to reinforce past learning rather than move forward with new topics.

With the likely possibility of virtual learning needing to continue beyond these first two weeks of instruction and seeing the overall success of our first week, our faculty and administration will be working together to revise the virtual learning plans so we can move forward with teaching and learning that continues to grow our students' knowledge, understanding, and skills within the district curriculum. After several virtual meetings to be held early next week with faculty, we will provide you with an update on these plans.

As the plans for virtual learning continue to evolve there are few things we can work on together.

1. With students being comfortable in their own homes while virtually learning, adding some routine to their day adds some stability for them. For example, getting dressed in school clothes for "school time", setting up a desk area for their school work, and treating the Google Hangout as a classroom environment with the same rules and procedures they follow in school. Your support in helping with this is greatly appreciated.
2. With our students working in the virtual cloud even more than they have in the past, I urge parents to not only monitor their children's physical wellness but also to ensure healthy practices of digital citizenship, responsible online communication, and access to appropriate websites and digital materials. With students not interacting in person it is even more important for parents to monitor children's social media access and social gaming activity. It is through these venues that students can cross the lines of digital citizenship and enter into the realm of inappropriate conduct.
3. Once the school day is "over" it is important that students have some release time. Getting outside with the weather getting warmer is one way this may occur. In doing so please remind your children to use social distancing measures. It is extremely important that during this time parents refrain from having their children participate in play dates and other social gatherings. While independent play is more appropriate, congregating together on the school's basketball courts and fields for group play should not occur. The school's playground has been closed in alignment with the Office of Emergency Management and the Borough of Rumson.

4. Seek your physician's guidance if you have questions, concerns, or if you or your children show any symptoms of sickness. It is important to remain at home while guidance is sought. The CDC website found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

contains such guidance. Related to this, any cases of COVID-19 that occur within the Rumson community will be reported out by the Monmouth County Health Commission No.1 found at <https://www.mcrhc.org/>. The schools do not have additional information beyond what the commission provides to the public and the Rumson School District will respond accordingly under the guidance of this commission.

Times like these can also lead to anxiety for both students and parents. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our administration, guidance counselors, or teachers if you need us to support your children. In the meantime, I urge you to use this opportunity to engage in your child's learning, wish you wellness and health, and join you as we navigate these times together.

Sincerely,

Dr. John E. Bormann
Superintendent of Rumson Schools