



EAST RUTHERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

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April 19, 2020

Good evening Parents/Guardians,

Hoping my communication this evening finds our community of parents and students safe and healthy. As the Superintendent of Schools, I could not be more proud of our district teachers, staff and administrative team who have been working tirelessly throughout the last month in ensuring a remote learning environment that has been recognized by New Jersey Department of Education. Together with the support of our amazing parents/guardians of the East Rutherford School District, we have been able to provide a remote instructional learning environment which continues to educate our students.

The Coronavirus/COVID19 pandemic has affected so many of our community members and our hearts continue to go out to all. In staying transparent with our school community, the last couple of weeks have been quite challenging with the passing of my father-in-law and now my wife's grandfather who is on hospice end of life care. Even though this time has been monumental for many, it is the efforts of our school community and our students with the many spirit day pictures that have become so comforting and have placed a smile on my face during this most difficult time.

As you might be aware by now, a few online news outlets reported on April 7th that the Governor decided to close schools for the remainder of the school year. I would like to clarify and point out that the Governor absolutely did not close school for the remainder of the school year. Instead, he extended the health emergency and noted that schools are closed indefinitely. If we do not return for the remainder of the school year, we will exhaust all resources and listen to all ideas regarding giving our students the best possible end of year experiences, especially some type of 8th Grade Commencement Ceremony.

Please note that due to the extension of school closure to May 15th, in order to be proactive, we will prepare for additional weeks of closing. More specifically, we will be preparing lessons up to June 1st. It is important to point out that Bill #A3904, which allows remote learning days to count towards the 180-day instructional annual requirement, passed the Senate and was signed by Governor Murphy. Of additional importance, is outlining the district's learning plan from May 1st onward. Please see below:

- **Preschool - 1st Grade** will move towards an online learning format. These grade levels will complete daily instruction in Math, ELA, Science and Social Studies via platforms such as: Reading Eggs, Math Seeds, Freckle, Reading A-Z, Mystery Science, and Boom Learning. Parents/Guardians will be contacted with a username and password for each platform and what activities need to be completed daily. Please note that similarly to Google Classroom, the teachers will be able to track students' progress via these platforms. This means that teachers will be able to tell which students are completing the work.

- For parents/guardians in Preschool - 1st Grade requiring a device, please share this with your child's classroom teacher, so that arrangements can be made for pick-up. More information will follow from the building principal.
- Grade levels that have been distributed hard copies of instructional packets, please **HOLD ON** to those packets until additional guidance is provided.
- 2nd Grade - 8th Grade students will continue with their online learning via Google Classroom.

After May 1st, please visit the district's website for the work to be completed. McKenzie School & Preschool Annex parents/guardians will click on the "**McKenzie Home Instruction**" tab to access lesson plan information.

Similarly, Faust School parents/guardians will click on the "**Faust Home Instruction**" tab to access lesson plan information.

As strong Wildcats, we all continue to push through this time together as a united team. Each day we move closer to conquering this pandemic and return to some normalcy. We will also stay positive and stay focused on providing a remote learning environment for our students.

As a reminder, it is imperative that parents/guardians recognize that this remote learning is counted as instructional time at the county level. As such, the lessons conducted in Google Classroom as well as the above named online programs, should continue to be tackled with an equal level of seriousness as when the students are physically present in school. The attendance requirements remain the same, as well as parental responsibility for ensuring daily student participation.

In regards to requests for virtual instructional lessons to be conducted via Zoom, it is the district's position at this time to not accommodate such requests given the many safety and FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) concerns. Additional discussions need to be conducted at the Board of Education level, in which district policies would need to be revised to reflect this remote instructional practice. Virtual IEP and 504 meetings will continue to occur, as well as teletherapy, as these have been approved by the New Jersey Department of Education.

To all of our amazing parents/guardians, please know that all of your hard work and cooperation during this time have not gone unnoticed and is very much appreciated. We are all blessed to have the caliber of students, parents, staff, teachers, administrators, Board of Education members and the greater community of East Rutherford working so hard to ensure instructional and academic success. It is the only way that we will triumph.

Stay safe and healthy. Please know that you matter! Be well!

Sincerely,

Giovanni A. Giancaspro
Superintendent of Schools