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April 13th, 2020

Dear Parents & Guardians of the Alexandria Central School District,

Rest assured as ACS will continue to follow developments regarding NYSED guidelines and regulations based on the impact of COVID-19. As we witness its continued spread, it is important that we do everything we can to slow and prevent the spread of this virus. Please follow the recommendations of our Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as our local health agencies. It is especially important to avoid close contact with others by social distancing, or physical distancing, meaning to keep physical space between yourself and other people outside your home. Stay at least 6 feet from other people, do not gather in large groups, and stay away from crowded places. These practices will slow the spread and protect all of us from the risks of COVID - 19.

As we begin our fifth week of being out of school, we hope everyone is doing well and staying healthy. Every day we are learning new information, and as we adjust more questions arise. Our hope is that this letter will answer some of your questions. You can also get the Governor's daily updates and regulations for school districts by going to <https://www.governor.ny.gov/>.

When will students return to school? There has been a great deal of confusion as to the date of return for students. This date, as you know, has changed several times over the last four weeks. We are obligated to follow the Governor's executive orders as they are issued and updated. His first executive order stated that schools would be closed from March 18th - April 1st. On Friday, March 27th he extended that date to April 15th. This last Monday, Governor Andrew Cuomo stated schools and nonessential businesses in New York will remain closed until at least April 29th. Governor Cuomo continues to evaluate and make adjustments necessary to help slow the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in the state.

NYS 3 - 8 and Regents Assessments - Last month the NYS Board of Regents canceled the NYS 3 - 8 ELA, Math, and Science assessments that were scheduled from March, April, and June. This last Monday, the NYS Board of Regents canceled the high school Regents exams scheduled for June due to the coronavirus shutdown.

What does this mean for Regents and Graduation? The COVID-19 emergency has evolved rapidly, leading to uncertainty as to when regular in-school classroom instruction will be able to resume throughout the state and whether students will be adequately prepared to take the Regents examinations. As a result, the Board of Regents and Department have cancelled the June 2020 administration of the NYS High School Regents Examination Program.

Because of this, the Department has modified the requirements that students must meet in order to earn

high school diplomas, credentials, and endorsements. These modifications apply to all students enrolled in grades 7–12 during the 2019–20 school year who were intending to participate in one or more of the June 2020 Regents Examinations.

- Students who, during the June 2020 examination period would have taken one or more Regents examinations, will be exempted from passing the assessments in order to be issued a diploma. To qualify for the exemption, students must meet one of the following eligibility requirements:
- The student is currently enrolled in a course of study culminating in a Regents examination and will have earned credit in such course of study by the end of the 2019–20 school year; or
- The student is in grade 7, is enrolled in a course of study culminating in a Regents examination and will have passed such course of study by the end of the 2019–20 school year; or
- The student is currently enrolled in a course of study culminating in a Regents examination and has failed to earn credit by the end of the school year. Such student returns for summer instruction to make up the failed course and earn the course credit and is subsequently granted diploma credit in August 2020; or
- The student was previously enrolled in the course of study leading to an applicable Regents examination, has achieved course credit, and has not yet passed the associated Regents examination but intended to take the test in June 2020 to achieve a passing score.

If you have any questions regarding NYS Regents exemptions, diploma requirements, or graduation pathways, please contact the high school counselor, Kevin Durr at kdurr@acsghosts.org.

There are still many questions about how extended school closures will affect class rankings, graduation, etc. We will continue to evaluate procedures as we learn more from the NYS Education Department and the NYS Governor. Several decisions for the end of the year are still left up in the air and dependent on when schools will reopen. We will keep you updated as these questions are answered.

Spring Break – In the Governor’s last Executive order 202.11, it was mandated that during any school vacations we must continue to provide instruction, school breakfast/lunch, and childcare as needed for emergency and healthcare workers. We understand that families were looking forward to spring break, but we ask that you continue to do the best you can based on our situation and the Governor’s Executive order. As of now, our only remaining break will be Memorial day.

Meals – Alexandria will continue to deliver breakfast and lunch for seven days every Tuesday while school is closed due to the COVID – 19 pandemic. In continuing to take safety precautions, please have a tote, cooler, box, or basket out at the end of your driveway for safe drop-off. We love all the kind notes and signs that students have made to show their appreciation. We are making and packing each meal with “love.”

Childcare Needs – Districts are required to offer childcare for children of essential employees. The SACC program through the Watertown YMCA offers these services at a satellite office in Clayton, NY. Please reach out to the Watertown YMCA to get your child(s) enrolled in the program.

Continuity of Learning – Alexandria understands that education which normally takes place at school cannot be replicated at home. Our district has worked hard to create an instructional plan that focuses on a variety of K – 12 educational opportunities that support skill retention, engagement, and learning. We understand that not every family has access to the internet, so we have done our best to provide written packets and materials to support the learning process. We are asking our instructional and support staff to reach out to students weekly. Please reach out to your child’s teacher or counselor with any questions or

needs. While these times in education continue to be new and difficult it is important that we hear from you if your child's needs are not being met. The district's priority is our student's educational, social, and emotional well-being.

Work-time and Assignments - We understand that students are not involved in a typical 7-hour school day, PLUS homework during "normal" times, so it cannot be expected that students complete 8 - 9 hours of work each day at home. Recommendations for the amount of time students should be engaged in remote learning daily have been gathered from a variety of sources. These guidelines are intended to be flexible to accommodate the wide variety of learners and types of instruction.

Grade Level	Daily Learning Time
Pre - K	20 - 60 minutes
K - 2	30 - 90 minutes
3 - 5	60 - 120 minutes
6 - 8	90 - 180 minutes
9 - 12	120 - 240 minutes

As educators, our priority and responsibility is the success of our children. We have been charged with providing meals, childcare, and educational continuity for our students during this closure. While this is new territory for all of us, we are doing our best to meet the needs of our students both educationally and emotionally. There will be mistakes and moments that we will all learn from as the next few weeks will not be easy. However, there will also be successes, hope, and laughter. As we find ourselves in a cozy, yet chaotic new situation and we face challenges, we ask that you take this opportunity to look at the situation from another lens. While we will continue to provide work in order to keep our students' minds moving forward. We also want to encourage you to take the time to bond with your children, your spouse, and your family. We have been given an opportunity to slow down, be creative, and appreciate nature. We are all facing this situation together, so it is important that we are there for each other. Remember we are ACSSTRONG.

Stay safe and healthy.
Best Regards,

Kylie Morgia

*"When something bad happens you have three choices.
You can either let it define you, let it destroy you, or let it strengthen you." - Dr. Seuss*