

March 27, 2020

Dear Ho-Ho-Kus Families,

As we are completing our second week of remote learning, I am writing now to update you on a number of topics and to provide you with further information regarding our school closure for COVID-19 as well as the plans for remote learning.

First and foremost, thank you for your words of support, contact, feedback, and partnership as we navigate these truly unprecedented times. Our collaborative strength will allow us to conquer these challenges together. Thank you too to our incredible teachers who have been moving forward, providing meaningful learning, and maintaining connections with students in creative ways. I feel very fortunate to be a part of this amazing school community.

Be on the lookout today for a communication from Dr. Eckert. It will contain a survey where you can provide feedback regarding the first 2 weeks of remote school learning.

Please continue reading the bullets below. The information is organized this way so you can more easily find these details at a later time.

School Closure Dates and Information:

- As stated by Lamont Repollet, the NJ Commissioner of Education, in his March 26, 2020 communication with school districts, "...as directed in Governor Murphy's Executive Order No. 104 and affirmed in Executive Order No. 107, all public, private, and parochial preschool program premises, and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools, shall remain closed to students as long as the executive orders remain in effect." Additionally, "...as noted in the Governor's daily press briefing today, the decision to reopen schools lies squarely with Governor Murphy. We do not intend to assess the reopening of schools until at least April 17, 2020, at the earliest."
- Given the above information, we will be having our third week of remote learning next week, 3/30-4/3. The week of April 6-10 will be our scheduled April break. We will keep that planned break from our structured remote learning, however, in my next communication, I will provide you with resources and links for "remote family excursions" and virtual places to visit during this week.
- Monday, April, 13, 2020 will be a district professional development day for teachers and staff, so there will be no scheduled remote learning for that day. We will be conducting workshops for teachers that will explore ways to integrate "live" elements to lessons, changing structures to the learning day, innovative teaching practices in remote learning, and what is true assessment in a virtual reality, to name just a few. We will resume our post spring break, remote learning school schedule on Tuesday, April 14, 2020.

## Health and Safety Decisions as Related to Ho-Ho-Kus School:

- As schools were first closed and our remote learning began, the school was closed to most people, with some school personnel still reporting to work. Once our wonderful custodial and maintenance staff (big thanks and kudos to them!) completed our intensive cleaning and disinfecting procedures in the school, effective Thursday, March 26, we have instructed all of our school staff to remain at home in the interest of safety and well-being for all. We believe this is a decision that is right for our school community. You may still contact us by email, and we also have many structures in place for you to communicate with us remotely. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us about any needs/concerns you may have or just to touch base. We have loved receiving emails, pictures, and sweet messages from students and their families.
- Congregating on school grounds is discouraged. The Ho-Ho-Kus Police have placed a large sign on our blacktop area by the fields to remind our residents of this recommendation. It is especially important that large groups of students (both our own K-8 students as well as high schoolers) do not gather here. Maintaining social distancing is challenging, I know. But it is very important to stay the course and follow these health guidelines for the good of our collective health and well-being. Please help enforce this with your families.
- We have been informed that notifications of a positive test result for COVID-19 would come from either the local or county health officer. As we have not received any information of positive test results from the local and/or county departments of health, and as we move further away from our initial school closure date, and we are outside of the designated 14 day contact period, the district would be less likely to be in this official conversation loop with the Board of Health. I will of course keep you apprised of any health information that pertains to our Ho-Ho-Kus School community.

In closing, these are truly unprecedented times that can be stressful and uncertain. We have both short term and long term challenges that we will need to face together both as a smaller community and as a nation. I am so proud of our school community and the efforts of our staff, students, and parents to work together to support one another and educate our students in the best way possible. We will continue to move forward; and we also look ahead with great anticipation for when we can be back at school again. We truly miss the students, our wonderful Ho-Ho-Kus School, and the day to day beauty of us learning there together.

My sincere wishes are with you for your good health and well-being.

With warm regards,

Diane Mardy