

Parent Update
March 6, 2020



eMail Alert

Dr. Deborah O'Connell, Superintendent of Schools

Dear Croton-Harmon Parents:

We are acutely aware that information about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to evolve at a rapid pace, and that you are eager to know how the Croton-Harmon School District is addressing this situation. At last evening's Board of Education meeting, I shared an update on what the district has done to date to stay well-informed and to communicate with you.

Before I share with you our plans for the coming days, I want to make very clear that, above all, the health and well-being of our students and staff is our top priority. I also want to reiterate that this is a very fluid situation so we will be communicating with you regularly. We are now consulting on a daily basis with Dr. Mier, our chief school medical officer and, when needed, the Westchester County Department of Health (DOH) to ensure we have the latest information about the potential spread of the virus and the protocols for our schools. Here is some information:

Buildings & Grounds

In terms of our schools, our Buildings & Grounds team have both the normal and flu season cleaning protocols in full swing. Our bus fleet is also part of this cleaning regime, which includes protocols for cleaning and disinfecting. These efforts will certainly continue. In terms of cleaning and disinfecting:

- Teachers have received a spray bottle with disinfectant and towel
- Disinfectant wipes have also been provided to CET teachers and are available in all computer labs. We will encourage students to wipe down their work space after each period.
- This weekend (March 7-8), all buildings are not accessible as our custodial staff will be conducting a deep cleaning and disinfecting on high-contact surfaces such as door handles and handrails, as well as in all classrooms.

Where Are We Now - Some Additional Information

Should a situation or concern be presented to us, our district will immediately contact Dr. Mier. We may also include the DOH if needed and then, based on their guidance, make a determination on how to proceed. Each concern will be evaluated individually to determine the course of action which includes if there is a need to communicate (if so, to whom), how we communicate and of course if we should close schools. In Croton-Harmon, we continue to monitor the situation through our daily

discussions with Dr. Mier and our webinars with the New York State Department of Health and other agencies. We adhere to the guidance we are given and will continue to do so.

I am regularly meeting with principals and our school nurses to review procedures and protocols, and our nurses also participate in public health webinars/calls and communications with health officials. Our District's Emergency Response team has convened every day this week to monitor and assess the situation.

As the recent NYS Department of Health webinar stressed, "There is a lot we can do to stop the spread of this and other respiratory viruses.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- **Stay home when you are sick."**

Given the uncertainty of other areas around Croton, we had cancelled field trips from this past Wednesday, March 4 - Saturday, March 7 of this week. We will reassess future trips.

Continuity of Learning

As a school district, we have numerous online tools, such as Google Classroom and other software programs, to help avoid disruptions to student learning should schools need to be closed.

In the event of an extended closure, students and parents should visit the district website where a landing page will tell students how to retrieve their on-line learning (eLearning). The landing page will include a message from me and the school principals. Principals will be directing students to their teachers' class web page. This class page will contain the eLearning opportunities for students so they can remain focused on their learning. It will also provide several informational links, such as a mindfulness link, physical exercise link and informational links. It will also have a link to the food pantry and other community resources.

The district will also provide a Chromebook for those students who may be in need. We recognize that internet access may be an issue for some; however, in speaking with Jesse Bourdon from the Croton Free Library, students may be able to obtain portable hotspots for free wifi internet access through the library. I will continue to explore this with him.

Again, we fully appreciate that this is a stressful time and that the uncertainty of this situation can be anxiety-provoking. I want to thank you for your ongoing support as we manage this situation. I encourage you to bring any question or concern you may have to your child's principal.

Yours in **Mission Possible**,

Dr. Deborah O'Connell



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