



Olga Hugelmeyer
Superintendent of Schools

May 11, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We hope you are doing well and enjoyed Mother's Day this past weekend. As you are likely aware, Governor Phil Murphy signed an Executive Order to extend public health emergency by 30 days and has closed in-person schooling throughout the state for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Please know that as a school district, we are still working hard to ensure students and staff are supported and we're planning as much as possible considering the uncertain conditions facing our schools, our communities, and our state.

NEW INFORMATION

Coronavirus and Children

A possible link has been reported between COVID-19 and a serious inflammatory disease recently termed "Pediatric Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome temporarily associated with COVID-19," an illness with symptoms that include fever, rash, abdominal pain, and diarrhea.

On April 27, an alert circulated from the U.K. about multi-system inflammatory disease in children with COVID-19, based on a small rise in the number of critically ill children with this illness in England. The New York City health department soon followed with its own alert.

At this time, the illness is rare globally and there very few cases in New Jersey. If you have concerns about your child's health or that of a family member you should immediately contact a doctor or healthcare provider.

End of Year Activities

Graduation

The Elizabeth Public Schools fully understands that senior year is a milestone in the educational journey of our students. The COVID-19 pandemic has unfortunately inhibited us from continuing with many of these rites of passage for our Class of 2020 Seniors. We are fully committed to implementing alternative means for our special senior activities.

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

We have established a Senior Task Force to brainstorm ways in which we can appropriately celebrate and honor our seniors in the coming weeks and will discuss topics including graduation, awards ceremonies, and delivery of yearbooks and diplomas.

Among the proposed options are live-streamed virtual ceremonies for each high school with traditional commencement speeches and presentation of the Class of 2020. We are also working on virtual eighth grade ceremonies. While these alternatives will not fully replace the experiences of being in a traditional live ceremony, we are hopeful that we are able to give our seniors and eighth graders some sense of celebration and accomplishment.

An announcement regarding our plan for graduation is anticipated to be made in detail no later than May 18, 2020. We know that our seniors would appreciate having their caps and gowns to take pictures with their families. A plan for distribution within the confines of social distancing will be shared on this date, as well.

Finally, regarding graduation, we want to express our gratitude by recognizing the high school Parent Teacher Organizations for their outstanding commitment to providing all graduating seniors with lawn signs to acknowledge the Class of 2020 graduates.

Prom/Project Graduation

Unfortunately, the Prom and Project Graduation have been canceled due to social distancing mandates.

Car Parades

Please be advised that car parades are not an approved method of celebration and are in violation of social distancing mandates according to the Office of Emergency Management.

Grading

Elizabeth Public Schools has made a good faith effort, within available capabilities, to support continued learning outside of school through E-remote learning and determined how best to issue grades and provide feedback to students during the coronavirus-related closure of school buildings.

Grades during a time of crisis cannot be assessed in the same manner as they are during a typical school setting. Therefore, a proposal for board approval at the June meeting will include schools moving to a Pass/Incomplete grading system for the fourth marking period for students in grades K-12. Teachers will evaluate students as either Passing (P) or Incomplete (I).

In grades K-2, students will continue to receive formative participation grades for completed work in all content areas. First, second, and third marking period grades will stand as reported in PowerSchool with a weight of 30% each. Fourth marking period grades will be graded based on teacher feedback on completion of instructional packets. Grades will be based on Pass/Incomplete and a weight of 10% to provide the greatest degree of equity for students with varying needs.

In grades 3-8, students will continue to receive formative participation grades for completed work in all content areas. First, second, and third marking period grades will stand as reported in PowerSchool with a weight of 25% each. Fourth marking period grades will be graded on a pass/incomplete scale with a weight of 25% to provide the greatest degree of equity for students with varying needs.

In grades 9-12, all passing (P) grades will convert to 4.0 quality points in a student's GPA; students in AP classes will have their passing mark weighted accordingly to a 5.0. All final exams have been cancelled.

Students who have an incomplete (I) grade will be given an intervention plan and an opportunity to earn a passing grade in the summer, by no later than August 15 for Grade 12 and early fall for grades K-11. Additional opportunities will be provided through the anticipated Promotion/Retention Program in the summer.

Elizabeth Public Schools is currently awaiting further guidance from the New Jersey Commissioner of Education in order to finalize our recommendation to the Board.

Report cards for all grades will be sent via e-mail and are available on PowerSchool.

Our Proactive Approach to Learning- Next Steps

Elizabeth Public Schools will be creating a plan for the reopening of our schools through the advisement of the EPS Taskforce that includes our City Health Officer, our Chief Medical Inspector and our School Nurses. The task force will develop guidance and identify essential resources that will be needed to safely open schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

Due to the continued uncertainty of circumstances that we face, we will be creating a plan for a Full-Scale Remote Learning Program to be presented at the June Board Meeting in the event that our schools are not reopened due to a continued health threat.

District teachers and administrators are already working to identify and address academic gaps students may experience during digital learning/school closure. Assessments to evaluate learning in September are being identified and revisions to curriculum calendars to reflect the needs of individual students will take place.

Elizabeth Public Schools will continue to make every effort to ensure that all of its students receive the highest quality education and memorable experiences possible. We want to thank you again for your patience and support for our E-remote learning program and your efforts to keep your children engaged in learning. We recognize the challenges that come with balancing all aspects of life during this difficult time.

Be safe and stay well.

Sincerely,



Olga Hugelmeyer