



Spotswood Public Schools

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES • 105 SUMMERHILL ROAD • SPOTSWOOD, NEW JERSEY 08884 • (732) 723-2200 • FAX: (732) 251-7666

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March 14, 2020

Dear Parents,

In yesterday's communication, I expressed that we were continually reviewing the educational landscape to best inform our decision-making process for our entire educational community. To date, the impact that COVID-19 has had on educational institutions within our country is unprecedented, including:

- More than 25% of states across our country have ordered mandatory state-wide closings of K-12 schools, currently ranging between one to six weeks.
- In our region, Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania have ordered mandatory state-wide closings of K-12 schools for two weeks.
- Many colleges and universities across the country, and most local higher education institutions, have extended spring break, canceled classes, and/or moved to online instruction, many for the remainder of the semester, including The College of New Jersey, Kean University, Rowan University, Princeton University, Stevens Institute of Technology, Seton Hall University, Middlesex County Community College, and Rutgers University.
- Many K-12 public schools in New Jersey have collectively closed by county, including Bergen County, Warren County, Hunterdon County, and Burlington County, currently ranging between two to four weeks.
- Extended school closures of K-12 public schools have been announced by individual school districts in all surrounding counties, including Union County, Somerset County, Mercer County, and Monmouth County.
- In our county, most K-12 public schools have announced an extended school closing of at least a week, including all neighboring municipalities (North Brunswick, Old Bridge, Monroe, East Brunswick); Milltown is similarly closed.

Additionally, we are receiving other messaging from State Officials and Offices that include plans to promote social distancing and limits on gatherings of more than 250 individuals. And even as we learn more about this virus each day, there still remains too much that is unknown about COVID-19 to say that we, as an educational community, can effectively handle confirmed cases should they appear in our community and schools without warning.

So while there is currently no documentation of any confirmed cases of COVID-19 within our communities, after review, the preponderance of evidence suggests that we begin to move to close our schools to students beginning next week and work toward an alternative means of education. More information will be provided on distance learning and our specific plan to educate students remotely



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over the next few days. In a conversation that I had with our County Superintendent yesterday, he validated that we could begin moving forward with distance learning next week, allowing “distance learning days” to count towards the required 180 days of learning that we need to provide our students.

While I am abundantly aware of the burden and hardship that this will place on many families within our communities, I do not believe that the best option for the health, wellness and safety of our students and staff is to bring approximately 2,000 individuals together each day in our four buildings given the information that is presented above.

As indicated yesterday, in order to best ensure that we are prepared to provide a coordinated meaningful online learning experience for our students, the Spotswood School District will be closed for students on Monday, March 16, 2020 as staff finalizes our ability to provide distance learning to students throughout the district.

After our work as a staff is complete on Monday afternoon, we will immediately enact our distance learning protocols and begin communicating, recording attendance, instructing, and presenting assignments to our students through Google Classroom. This experience will continue, at least until Friday, March 20, 2020 as **our schools will be CLOSED to students from Monday, March 16, 2020 through Sunday, March 22, 2020**, including all after-school student programming and extracurricular activities.

While it is our plan to review each week at a time, I would ask our families to begin thinking long-term so that they are best prepared should we need or be instructed to close for a longer duration of time than indicated above as many other districts, counties, and states have already announced.

Graham Peabody
Superintendent
Spotswood Public Schools