March 16, 2020

Cornell Families:

As of today, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has not issued clear guidance to school districts about whether or not alternative instructional methods will count as actual school days. School districts were initially advised that most likely they would, however, no official announcement has been made. The latest announcement from Governor Wolf stated that districts would be waved of the requirement of 180 days by June 30. Nothing was stated or communicated about making up of these cancellation days.

The Cornell School District has a plan in place to offer alternative educational options, either through online methods, or work that was sent home. I believe we are ahead of the game in that regard as other districts are still working through, and creating their plans. However, due to the uncertainty of the situation, and the lack of guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) we will have to treat the remainder of this week, March 17 – 20 as a full closure. No students will be required, or obligated to do any school work during this time. Once guidance is given from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Cornell is told that these alternative educational days will count as school days, we can start up the daily lessons and activities from home.

Cornell Elementary parents, at this time there is no need to pick up materials from the school. Once we receive word that we can start using the alternative educational days, we’ll reopen to allow for parents to pick up the packets of student work. The food program will continue at the three locations identified; Cornell cafeteria, Coraopolis Gazebo and Cottage Park on Neville Island.

The Cornell staff put a lot of work into creating our alternative educational plan, and I’m sure we’ll be restarting that plan once guidance and clarity is given about making up school days. I know this is a frustrating and confusing time, but we’ll get through it! Stay healthy and more to come!

Dr. Aaron Thomas
Superintendent