

Gateway School District



March 23, 2020

Dear Families,

We hope that all of you are staying safe and healthy during these unprecedented events surrounding the pandemic COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Gateway School District thanks you for all that you are doing to support your families during this difficult time! The decision by Pennsylvania's Governor Tom Wolf to close schools for two weeks (March 16-27) has come with a lot of questions and concerns from parents, guardians, students, staff, and school officials. At this time, with no idea as to when Gateway School District will return to normal operations, I would like to inform everyone of the following communications.

1. *Will Gateway School District make up the educational time being missed for the COVID-19 outbreak?*

The guidance provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) states: "PDE will not penalize districts/schools that fail to meet the minimum day and hour requirement." However, the current guidance further states that schools are **STRONGLY** encouraged to plan possible adjustments to their calendars (e.g., use of snow days, an extension of the school year, etc.) to provide as much instruction as possible as a result of this unprecedented event.

2. *What will happen if school closings are extended?*

At the onset of the state-ordered, two-week school closing, our focus was on how to properly adhere to the federal, state, and local guidance to ensure the safety of our students, staff, and community. Now that we are one week into the closing, Gateway School District is turning our attention to the very real possibility that the mandated school closure will be extended. With that in mind, our administrative team, in consultation with our teaching staff will execute a remote **Continuity of Education Plan (CEP) of learning for regular and special education students (K-12) beginning on Monday April 6, 2020**. In order to prepare for this unprecedented task, the District surveyed access to technology and logistically made iPads and Chromebooks available. Also, understanding that a move to a remote learning environment (K-12) for continuity

of education comes with challenges, the District will be implementing the following steps to prepare.

- **On Wednesday, March 25th, 2020** at 10:00 am, an introductory, online meeting will be held with teachers/staff. Guidance and protocols for Elementary and Secondary remote learning will be provided to teachers beginning March 26, 2020 thru April 3, 2020.
- **Student attendance**, beginning April 6, 2020, will be recorded if work is completed via online learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Pearson Realize, etc. within appropriate timelines.
- Students with **Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)** will receive lessons from their special education teachers designed in accordance with their needs. Student's special education teachers will communicate regularly with families.
- **The 3rd nine week** grading period will conclude on Friday, April 10, 2020, ensuring previously assigned work is submitted and graded. Report cards will be issued the following week. **The 4th nine week** grading period will begin on Monday, April 13, 2020.

As superintendent of schools, I can assure you that while challenges certainly exist, our administrators and teachers will work extremely hard to support your child through this endeavor. Please be patient with us! We understand that what may be provided by the district will be vastly different from the norm, but we cannot do what's "normal" right now. We also realize that these are not easy times for all of you and your children. Likewise, our teachers and administrators are adjusting to the "new normal" and have similar anxiety with everything happening so fast! Rest assured, we will do our very best in supporting students' needs when implementation of remote learning begins.

3. *Impact on Standardized Testing?*

On Thursday, March 19, 2020 the Pennsylvania Department of Education announced the cancellation of statewide assessments for the 2019-2020 school year as a result of COVID-19. This includes the PSSA, PASA, and Keystone Exams. As such, no schools in the Commonwealth will be administering these assessments this year.

4. *Major School Events?*

Given the COVID -19 crisis has been evolving every day, we have **NOT** made any long term plans or decisions in regards to events such as the musical, prom, or graduation. We certainly understand the significance of these events in the lives of our students, especially our seniors, and their families. **IF** and when the time comes to make such determination, we will consider all options before making informed decisions regarding the status of these events.

In closing, please continue to take care of yourself, your families, and each other. Everyone's health and welfare are paramount right now. Check in on loved ones and continue to demonstrate care, compassion, and concern for each other. Be patient! I know these are hard times for everyone. We ask that you stay tuned for additional updates as we will continue to communicate the most accurate and up-to-date information on our website and various social media outlets in as timely a manner as possible. As such, if any clear, additional direction is provided by PDE and/or Governor Tom Wolf's office, we will update you accordingly.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Short', written in a cursive style.

William Short, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools