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WEST ELIZABETH - JEFFERSON HILLS - PLEASANT HILLS

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Supervisor of Special Education/Pupil Personnel

Monday, March 16, 2020

Dear Parents:

Today we met as an administrative team and also conferred with superintendents from across the county to continue to plan our response to the COVID-19 pandemic for the next two weeks and beyond. While there are still a few items of clarification that all of us are waiting on from the state, I am confident that we have a solid and sensible plan moving forward. First and foremost, our actions reflect the guidelines and recommendations set forth by the CDC and the Allegheny Health Department to act in the best interests of public health. I want to make sure that our communication with staff and parents is direct, clear, and concise. Unfortunately, information is changing rapidly, so every plan must be flexible enough to change, and we're asking everyone to remain calm and as patient as possible.

As you saw in Governor Wolf's statement on Friday, all schools are closed for two weeks. This means that no direct instructional activities should be taking place, and our students should not be accountable for anything related to their courses. With that being said, we are going to make a list of resources available through each student's Clever account in case parents wish to voluntarily have students practice on some of the programs and applications that are available. **THIS IS VOLUNTARY AND WILL NOT COUNT FOR OR AGAINST THEM IN ANY WAY.** What wasn't very clear in Governor Wolf's communication thus far is if the days will have to be made up; he said districts can apply for a waiver if they do not meet the requirements for time and days of instruction. What confused many people about this communication is that on the actual waiver form it clearly states that you have to attempt to get your days in before June 30, 2020 before you can file for the waiver. We are currently seeking clarification on this from the Governor's office.

We are planning to reassess the situation next week and will be prepared to offer online instruction starting March 30 if and when we are told that virtual learning will count as instructional days. Switching to an online format with integrity is not as simple as some may think. While we have the instructional capacity and vehicles for online learning for the vast majority of students, offering related services (which are part of a student's IEP and are required by law) such as hearing, vision, speech, OT, PT, and emotional and learning support can be more challenging. There are also contractual obligations we need to be aware of when making these decisions. Our teachers are contracted for 182 days, and if we start online instruction and still have to go until the end of June, we may not have our teachers available for some of that extra time. While I do have some concerns about elementary reading regression and some math concepts, I feel that by encouraging your child to read and work through some of the voluntary resources, you may diminish any potential issues.

LUNCHES WILL BE PROVIDED FOR ALL FAMILIES IN NEED BEGINNING TUESDAY, MARCH 17

The District is working with our food service management company to provide meals to ANY students in need of lunch. Meals will be delivered by school buses to the following distribution locations between 11:30 am - 12:30 pm each day:

- Floreffe Fire Hall
- West Elizabeth Fire Hall
- Marhoefer Drive Apartments
- Mowry Park
- 885 Fire Department
- Entrance C117 in the back of the building of the High School.

During the Coronavirus closure, the District will make lunches for any student that reserves a meal by 5:00 pm each day for the following day's lunch. To place a lunch order, families must email foodservice@wjhsd.net or call 412-655-8610 x6232 and state the name of the student(s) needing a lunch AND the distribution location for pick up.

Meals will be delivered Monday through Friday as long as the District remains closed due to the Coronavirus. Meals will be available beginning Tuesday, March 17. You will need to provide the name(s) of students when picking up the meals.

We would also like to provide students an opportunity to pick up medication or other items that are essential during this time off. You must email your building principal and schedule a time between 12:00 pm-2:00 pm tomorrow for pick up. After that, the buildings are going to be deep cleaned again and will be locked down. If you do not have transportation, please email your principal; we will do what we can to accommodate your needs.

While we realize that many expect closures to go beyond two weeks, we want to make sure we plan for the worst-case scenario, but remain calm and not make any important decisions until we have sufficient information. As soon as we receive any information that modifies our plan in any way, you will be notified. I am confident that if we all remain calm and are vigilant with our handwashing practices and limit potential exposure, we will have time to address any learning that might have been lost because of this crisis. After this is over, it will be impossible to know if we all overreacted or did too much, but it will be obvious if we ended up doing too little. We will continue to update you via email, phone, social media, and our website as relevant information becomes available. Thank you for your continued support and understanding as we remain committed to the health and safety of our students, staff, and families.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael Ghilani

Superintendent of Schools

It is the policy of the West Jefferson Hills School District to not discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, age, race, color, and national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 5094 and Title VI. For information regarding services, activities, programs, and facilities that are accessible to and usable by handicapped persons or about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Director of Human Resources at 412-655-8450 x2228.