



An Update on Distance Learning

April 14, 2020

Dear Irvington School Community,

I hope this message finds you well, having enjoyed the Passover and Easter holidays. While these holidays may have felt different during this time of social distancing, I do hope you were able to find some joy in connecting virtually with your family and friends. Surely the global battle with the COVID-19 pandemic will have lasting impacts on how we live and communicate. Over the past few weeks, we have all adapted our personal lives to include new required approaches and strategies to accomplish what we may have considered to be routine tasks before. Because there is nothing routine about teaching children, the Irvington UFSD has been adapting its approaches to teaching and learning during the current, extended closure. In prior communications, I have written about the evolution of our distance learning practices and today I am pleased to announce yet another positive shift.

Distance Learning Phase 3

Over the course of this week, the teachers in all of the Irvington schools will transition to providing live instruction and offering live support sessions utilizing Google Hangouts Meet. As a part of this transition, our special-area teachers, related service providers and other instructional personnel will also begin to provide live instructional experiences. Specific student-learning schedules are being finalized for use at each school and will be communicated by each school principal and posted on the District website as a new component of the [Guide to Distance Learning](#). Parents and students are asked to please review these schedules as they will take effect on Monday, April 20th, with teachers reconnecting with their classes during the scheduled times. Like all transitions, I am sure there will be a few bumps along the way for students, parents and teachers alike. So, I thank you in advance for your patience and support during this time. Should you have questions regarding this enriched approach to teaching and learning, which we are referring to as Distance Learning Phase 3, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or principal.

Supporting Our School Community

Just as our instructional and learning needs have changed, so have many aspects of our personal lives. This period of time has introduced many challenges for members of our school community due to the loss of jobs, illness or financial difficulties. Therefore, our unity as a school community is needed now more than ever. Our school district has been providing assistance to many families by offering meals and other items they needed to navigate difficulties even before the onset of the current situation and will continue to do so. The Village of Irvington Recreation Department and the PTSA have been amazing partners in this work. However, their efforts require support. If you can, you are encouraged to make donations to PTSA's Bulldog Family Fund (BFF). All of the money donated to the BFF will directly be used to assist families in our school district. You can make donations by [visiting the PTSA's BFF webpage](#).

Health Needs and Access to Health Care

Our talented and dedicated nursing staff continues to be available to lend

assistance as needed. While our schools are physically closed, they are still actively involved in supporting the health and wellness of our students. In light of the current health crisis, it is important that you keep your school nurse informed if anyone in your home contracts COVID-19. They will keep this information confidential and will reach out to you to provide support. Please continue to communicate with your school nurse by sending them emails to address the health needs of your child(ren).

Access to healthcare and health insurance is also of critical importance. New York State may be able to assist those who have lost health insurance. For more information on this opportunity, [please view the letter that is linked here](#).

Finding Balance in Our Lives

During these difficult times, it is important that we all continue to find balance in our lives by continuing to engage in positive experiences and avoiding too much focus on the unsettling coronavirus news that surrounds us. Striking a comfortable balance between professional and personal responsibilities has been a challenge for many of our dedicated educators who have a strong desire to support our students as much as is possible. With the transition to Distance Learning Phase 3, my hope is that teachers will be able to again settle into more traditional school routines and that questions from students and parents can be addressed through the scheduled help sessions and by way of email during the school day. Together, we will continue to partner on providing the very best learning experiences for our students, while being certain to support one another through these stressful times.

Board of Education Meetings

While the District is closed, the Board of Education will continue to meet but will hold virtual meetings. Links to access the meetings will be posted on the [District website](#) under the Announcement section and on [BoardDocs](#). The next Board of Education meeting will be held tonight at 7:00 pm. In this meeting, the Board and I will continue our discussion regarding the 2020-21 District budget and will have to make many critical decisions to maintain responsible, sustainable finances in order to preserve our valued program offerings. Please consider viewing the Board of Education meeting to learn more about this important process.

Today, more than ever, I am proud to serve our amazing school community and am pleased to do so in partnership with an amazing team of educators, a trusting and supportive parent community and incredible partners who stand ready to assist the needs of our community. Together, we will continue to be committed to your children and will ensure that their needs are met today and that they are prepared for the brightest future possible.

Every student, every day,

Kris

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