



A Communication from the Superintendent of Schools

April 28, 2020

Dear Irvington School Community,

It is hard to believe that we are now in our seventh week of distance learning. During this challenging time, I have witnessed tremendous effort and dedication by so many people in our school community. Whether it is the caring neighborly actions of supporting those in need, the dedicated work of our educators to provide high quality learning experiences or the flexibility that students and their families have demonstrated, we have all come together to maintain the greatest sense of normalcy possible. It really can't be said enough, that these are trying times for everyone and that everyone - teachers, parents and students - should be applauded for all that you are doing each and every day.

Life today has become a very delicate and difficult balancing act of trying to maintain our health and the health of our families while attempting to juggle our professional lives and the educational lives of our children. Speaking as an educator, these are very unique times. We entered the teaching profession with the idea of guiding the growth of our students through interpersonal interactions. The very nature of K-12 education is grounded in human interaction, and while we are doing our best to make the necessary shift to distance learning, this is as challenging for us as teachers as it is for you as parents. This journey is a complex one, there are the challenges that exist in navigating the digital platform, as well as having limited access to our tried and true instructional resources, all the while attempting to care for our own families who are all working and learning from home as well.

All District employees are maintaining their professional responsibilities, which now extend well beyond the time spent in virtual learning sessions with their students. In many cases, each lesson or educational task is being reinvented every day to accommodate our new mode of learning, as what was done in the past simply may not work in the distance learning environment. Thus, teachers are continuously planning new lessons - each and every day. Outside of instruction and planning, our teachers are participating in on-going professional learning in pursuit of providing the best possible learning experiences for their students. Faculty members are also engaged in several meetings each day for a multitude of essential purposes that include IEP and 504 meetings and other necessary professional meetings.

As the end of the school year is rapidly approaching, we still do not have guidance as to whether schools will reopen this spring. While this may appear to be unlikely; the District is formulating plans in the event that school does reopen, using models that have been implemented in other countries, to inform our thinking. Even if schools were not to physically reopen this spring, we are developing plans to support smooth transitions from grade to grade and school to school. These plans will take into consideration the necessary orientation and academic and social-emotional supports to ensure success next year.

We cannot consider the end of the year without being cognizant of the many special activities or events in which students normally participate. While it is

unlikely that we will be able to host many of these experiences in a traditional way, each school is considering how to honor those who will be moving up to the next school or moving on to the next experience and how to close out the year in a positive way for everyone. While those plans are in the works, none of the planning can be more imperative than those being developed for the IHS graduation. Please trust that we will do everything in our power to create a memorable experience to celebrate our seniors' accomplishments and journey through IUFSD. The IHS administration is partnering with students to identify unique ways to end the year joyously with some special events. Specific information regarding any year-end events will be communicated directly from each school.

In the coming weeks, I will be announcing news regarding the school calendar, District budget developments and the Board of Education election. To stay on top of the most recent news, please join me tomorrow for my weekly Facebook Live broadcast at 12:00 pm at www.Facebook.com/IrvingtonUFSD/ and be sure to follow our Instagram page at www.Instagram.com/IrvingtonUFSD/ where we are regularly posting photos and videos including [this recent video that was developed by our dynamic team of school nurses](#).

In closing, I hope you are all well and I look forward to the time when I will see you and your children again, in person.

Take good care,

Kris

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