

Office of the Superintendent
D.J. Shepardson
315-845-6800
djshepardson@westcanada.org

**West Canada Valley
Central School**

Memo

To: Board of Education, K-12 Faculty, Staff, Students, Parents/Guardians
From: D.J. Shepardson, Superintendent
Date: 3/23/2020
Re: Emergency Closing Update

Emergency Closing Update:

As we enter our second week of closing, more questions begin to develop as we allow our minds to drift toward long-term closings and the impact this may have on so many different areas of our society. During times of crisis staff, students, parents/guardians, and community receive numerous messages from a range of entities and individuals. The same as all of you, I watch and read the information on a daily basis and process the information to assist in the development of plans as we move forward. My main focus at this time is to rely on reliable and factual sources to receive information and share what I know with all members of our educational community. While I will never release information that is not validated, I realize the information I share can change on a daily basis.

The message I share today will focus on two phases of planning. The first phase is on the immediate future as we are scheduled to be closed through April 14, 2020. As you know, this time period includes the previously scheduled spring recess (April 3, 2020 – April 13, 2020). A large part of our first phase is to ensure that our educational community stays healthy and we follow both the federal and state guidelines as presented. From an educational standpoint we are ensuring that students have previously instructed curriculum that is being used for review and to ensure some sense of educational stability. Teachers remain in contact with students to

support each of them with resources needed to complete the assigned workload. All administrative and teacher emails are available on the school website in addition to the individual communication tools utilized by our teaching staff. If you are having any issues at this time, please do not hesitate to reach out to the teacher or administration for assistance. We will continue to provide meals between the hours of 10:00 am and 12:00 pm as long as we are permitted to do so. At this time, I have no information from our state officials whether this current closure will be reduced or extended. Once I receive this information I will certainly share with everyone. Please be advised that access to the building is very limited and is done by appointment only at this time.

Phase 2 Planning

Many of the questions I am receiving at this time are related to potential long-term concerns. I want assure everyone that some level of planning is taking place as we await guidance from both the federal and state level. Some of the topics that are currently on our agenda include;

- **Educational planning and instruction:** If the closure extends beyond our current return date of April 14, 2020; we will use the guidance provided by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to develop our local plans.
- **Regents Exams that are scheduled for June:** At this time we have no information if they will take place as scheduled or if there will be changes to the current requirement. We will continue to monitor the situation.
- **AP Courses and Exams:** At this time we have only preliminary information from the College Board regarding impact on the course and exam schedule. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as information is finalized.
- **College Now:** The district is working with the college to develop plans that work for the college and our district students. Once we finalize any plans, this will be shared with the families and students enrolled.
- **Grading/Marking Periods:** Decisions on grading and adjustments to marking periods will come once we receive guidance from NYSED. In addition, class rankings and other related grading topics are all part of further discussion in the event of an extended

closure. The district is certainly aware of the importance as it relates to this year's senior graduating class.

- **Graduation:** As you are aware, many colleges have begun to postpone graduation ceremonies scheduled for May. This is something we are certainly aware of and will continue to monitor. At this time, it is far too soon to be discussing postponements or alternative plans. What I will say at this time, is that we continue to monitor the COVID-19 crisis and will keep you updated as information is provided.
- **Spring Sports:** Spring sports are postponed until at least April 14th as per Section 3. If and when we receive further updates I will certainly share this information.
- **Music:** As of now all events scheduled for the spring are on hold until we receive guidance on the current closure.

These are challenging times that naturally create some level of stress and anxiety. Although this cannot be avoided, I encourage you to take this time to focus on your health and your family. Please know that the West Canada Valley School District is thinking about all of you and is here to support you in any way possible. I will share the message that is being spoke across the nation; we will get through this crisis and our school will reopen when it is safe to do so. All of the questions you have will be answered as this crisis evolves. Once we are clear to open, we will welcome students back and look forward to providing the high quality education that the students in this district deserve. Take care and stay safe.

D.J. Shepardson - Superintendent