

April 1, 2020

Dear Haldane Families,

I hope this letter finds you and your family in good health. As you are aware, COVID-19 continues to spread throughout Putnam County and the greater New York area. There is no doubt that the virus has impacted the Haldane community and that we must take active measures to continue to mitigate its spread. At the same time we are doing our best to maintain continuity of instruction for students. To that end I have a few updates for you:

School Calendar Adjustments

Governor Cuomo's latest executive order requires that school districts continue to provide continuity of instruction through any previous planned periods of closure. That is, we are required to provide instruction to students through our originally scheduled spring break (April 6 through April 13). I know that many of our families were looking forward to a break from school next week but we have a civic and social responsibility to follow the Governor's order. I communicated this to our faculty along with some general guidelines to follow. I expect our faculty to remain flexible and supportive of individual student and/or family needs, including those who may be taking a break from school work for religious observances. I know that our families will also be respectful of any faculty member who chooses to do the same.

Updated Continuity of Learning Plan

Attached to this email is the updated Continuity of Learning Plan. This plan provides an updated overview of expectations and structures to maintain instructional continuity through this period of school closure. The plan is also posted to our district website under the "COVID-19" tab.

School Facilities Closed

I have received several communications from concerned members of our community about school-aged children congregating on our campus and not following social distancing measures. Please help us by reinforcing to your child that if they are to leave your home that they should not be congregating with others, and they should not be on our school grounds. I have directed my staff to take measures to close and/or limit public access to spaces that were otherwise available for community use. This was a difficult decision but after discussion with local officials it became apparent that it was the right thing to do. Please help us by refraining from using these spaces, in particular the playground and athletic fields.

Community Forum

I will host another COVID-19 Community Forum tomorrow (Thursday) at 11:00 a.m. Two members of the Putnam County Department of Health will join me on the webinar. We had over 100 attendees in last week's webinar and have expanded our capacity to accommodate up to 500 attendees. The webinar will be recorded and posted to our website if you are unable to attend.

I would like to thank you for your continued patience and support through this crisis. Our school faculty and staff have done their best to adapt to this challenge. As each day has brought new challenges it has also brought opportunities to envision how we can best support our community. On a personal note, each day has only strengthened my resolve that we will come out of this crisis as a stronger and even more cohesive school community.

I wish you and your family continued health.

Sincerely,
Phil Benante, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools
Haldane Central School District