

John V. Dolan
Superintendent of Schools



1 Craig B. Gariepy Avenue, Islip Terrace, NY 11752
Phone: 631-224-2010 Fax: 631-581-1617
www.eischools.org

March 21, 2020

Dear East Islip Community,

This letter is to thank you for the highly professional standards you have maintained under extremely adverse circumstances and to clarify our plan moving forward. Thomas Jefferson's idea of a free and public education for all was pure and brilliant. Now more than ever we realize that online learning before the age of 18 is not the best option for our students. Students need to be in school for so much more than just reading, writing and arithmetic. Sadly, gathering in schools is not an option so we must resort to a temporary move to a virtual experience. Here in East Islip, we are building a "Connected Educational Experience" for our students. Our plan for phasing into the "Connected Educational Experience" is as follows:

Phase 1-Connection

During the first week, we focused on connecting with each other. Teachers to students, teachers to administrators, administrators to administrators, students to students, school district to union officials, school district to parents. (I think you get the idea. If I left any connections out, I apologize in advance.)

Phase 2-Building Your Virtual Day

I truly appreciate how hard everyone has worked to create lessons for our students. As we begin to focus on these lessons, students, teachers, administrators and families must create a new normal to replace our daily schedules and bells. I know you all have begun to do this, and I am beginning to hear very positive things as a result. We will be reaching out to families electronically this week to help them establish normalcy in their home as it relates to schoolwork. The key ingredient in this whole plan is patience. The routines that we have known our whole lives have been temporarily taken away, so please be patient with each other because we all learn different ways and at different speeds.

Phase 3-Content

We know that 3-8 math and ELA testing has been canceled. But as of noon, Saturday, March 21, we have nothing definite past April 2. If by the grace of God, we were to

return to our normal school day on April 2, I believe everyone would be fully prepared to finish the year together with a smile. Since it is looking more and more unlikely, we must concentrate on connecting with each other and our students to create daily routines in our virtually Connected Educational Experience. I trust that once we have clarity as to when we may return to our normal school day, the professionals I trust, appreciate and respect so much, will work together to formulate a plan to bring closure to what will go down in history as an unforgettable school year.

We all believe the best place for our students to learn is in our schools. That right and privilege has been taken away by a greater public health concern. In a time when our normal routines have been taken away, I am so proud of all of the employees of the East Islip School District who have simply rolled up their sleeves and said “How can we help provide a pillar of normalcy for our students, families and community in a time of National Emergency?” America was built on creativity, ingenuity and a relentless work ethic. I truly believe the East Islip School District and community will come through this crisis together, stronger and more united than ever before. Once this emergency passes, we will be able to look back together and see what a shining example we set for future generations so they will survive the catastrophic event or events they will face.

Please continue to monitor your emails, district website and Facebook page for official updates from the district. Every Monday and Friday I will be sending a three-minute update to the community at 5:00 p.m. unless circumstances necessitate another call.

1. Please ensure your contact information is up to date in the Infinite Campus Parent Portal for robocalls and/or emails during this time and the remainder of the school year.
2. If or when this school closure is extended by the governor, we will only provide access to our buildings for the pickup of absolutely essential items under strict guidelines that will be provided to you.
3. All permits/usage of our fields and playgrounds have been suspended. All protections provided for the use of our fields and playgrounds have been suspended. We truly want to finish the 2020 school year together. We are urging the community to heed the warnings of our health officials and practice social distancing. You can get a lot of exercise by walking or riding your bikes safely. (No bikes are ever allowed on the new track). Suffolk County has closed their playgrounds for a reason. Taking your child on playground equipment is not safe. We are lucky to have Heckscher State Park

close by, please take advantage of the open spaces. Please stay safe, stay apart, but wave and smile as you pass one another.

4. If you have any specific, individual needs, please be sure to email your appropriate administrator with your request.
5. If you are not sure who to ask for help, simply email jdolan@eischools.org and jmann@eischools.org and we will connect you with the appropriate person.

My promise to all of you is we will all get through this together and when it is all over I will find each and every one of you, look you in the eye, shake your hand and say thank you for your service under incredibly, difficult circumstances.

Sincerely,

John V. Dolan

Superintendent of Schools

P.S. East Islip, thank you for giving me a reason to love you more each day.