



# RIDGEWOOD

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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March 9, 2020

Dear Ridgewood Public School Community,

As you may have already heard, school districts have been directed to develop plans to maintain continuity of instruction in the event that a school closure is necessary due to an escalation of the COVID-19 virus outbreak. On March 5, 2020, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) informed all districts of the following:

- Home instruction through virtual and/or alternative means may be used to satisfy the 180-day requirement if a Board of Education receives a written directive to institute a public health-related closure from either the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) or the local health officer of the jurisdiction. This is great news if we have to close schools. Without this type of directive, a closure will not count towards the 180-day requirement. This decision only applies to the current situation involving COVID-19.
- We are working with our food service provider to continue to provide meals for those students eligible for free and/or reduced lunch should a closure occur. Details will be shared directly with those families.
- While in the past, virtual or alternative days could not be used toward the 180-day requirement, they will count in this instance. Therefore, the district is currently establishing procedures and finalizing our plan for grade-appropriate academic engagement of our students and a mechanism for tracking attendance. This week, we will be reaching out to make sure there is connectivity between schools and your homes. Should the district be directed to close by the NJDOH or local health department, we will disseminate the plan at that time.
- Our district continues to implement additional cleaning and disinfecting procedures to keep our staff and students healthy and safe. Everyone should be washing their hands...often.
- The NJDOH has established a hotline for schools, and I am working directly with the Village Health Department to respond to questions about employees and student health concerns. Both the NJDOH and the Village Health Department have been excellent, knowledgeable, responsive, and collaborative. I appreciate their professionalism.

Additionally, we are monitoring the US State Department Travel Advisory, which uses a 1-4 scale. I ask that you notify your child's principal if you will be traveling over the April break. While this may appear intrusive, please understand that we only want to be able to monitor re-entry should a health advisory change while you are away. If that does occur, you may be asked to quarantine.

This information is not meant to cause alarm but rather to reassure you that we are ready and prepared. It is my most sincere hope that our plans will never be used. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Sincerely,

Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D  
Superintendent of Schools

C: Ridgewood Board of Education  
Dr. Wayne Yankus, District Physician  
Ms. Dawn Centulo, Ridgewood Health Officer/Director

