

March 6, 2020

Good Afternoon HTPS Community,

Preparedness has been at the forefront of everyone's mind since our last correspondence and it seems that we receive a multitude of emails daily about the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Throughout the week, we have collaborated with superintendents across the county and state; spoken with our local health department, and continued preparations with our administrative team.

As outlined in previous communications, it is important to reiterate the following information:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Do not forget between your fingers and under your nails. Use alcohol-based sanitizer if soap and water are unavailable.
- Prevent the spread of germs by covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Frequently and routinely clean and disinfect objects, including door knobs and cell phones.
- Keep your child home if s/he is ill or exhibiting respiratory systems.

The Hillsborough Township School District is following the advice of the New Jersey Department of Education, as well as state and local health departments. The New Jersey Department of Health is monitoring information received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and is working closely with our local health department to monitor the situation and is preparing guidance documents for schools and childcare facilities. New Jersey school districts received new guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education on March 5 emphasizing that the most important thing for schools to do at this time is to plan and prepare, in the event that *"schools may be asked to close preemptively or reactively . . ."* *The NJDOH guidance identifies school closure as a potential strategy to limit transmission within a community; therefore, in the event a board of education is provided a **written directive by either the NJDOH or the health officer of the jurisdiction** to institute a public health related closure, the board of education may utilize other methods to provide instructional services to enrolled students.*

Please be assured that we are working to develop realistic and reasonable plans to provide instruction and support students in the event of a district-wide, long-term mandatory closure. There are many pieces to this puzzle that must include equitable access to instruction for all students including provisions for special education and related services for students with disabilities. We will share timely information as we develop a plan that best addresses the needs of the students and staff of Hillsborough.

Additionally, any day in which students impacted by a public health-related closure have access to alternate instructional methods consistent with the guidance provided by the NJDOE, will count as a day in which the Board of Education has provided public school facilities toward its compliance with the 180-day requirement in accordance with New Jersey statute. However, they are **very clear that this flexibility to count a day on which public school facilities are**

**closed toward the Board of Education's statutory 180-day requirement applies strictly to public health-related school closures and not to any other type of closure or other days on which public school facilities are not made available. Any closures made, absent a written directive from either the NJDOH or the health officer of the jurisdiction, will not count.**

As stated in earlier correspondence, absences continue to be monitored and appropriate school-based precautions are in place. At this time, we are not cancelling local field trips. Should your child(ren) become upset or display increased anxiety or concern about these current events, please encourage him/her to seek the assistance of a trusted adult, including the school counselor.

Again, please take a look at our [previous communication](#) and peruse the resources available on COVID-19 at the [CDC website](#), specifically [NJDOH's COVID-19 Information for Schools and Businesses webpage](#).

Please know that the safety of our students and staff remain at the forefront of any decision that is made.

Have a safe and enjoyable weekend,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.  
Acting Superintendent