



PLATTSBURGH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Hornet students and parents:

I hope this message finds you each healthy and secure, and navigating our collective isolation successfully. Frustratingly, the things which I don't know still overshadow those which I do, but I will continue to do my best to keep you abreast of developments and State-level directives which impact our district.

As you are aware from my correspondence last week, Governor Cuomo has extended the current school closure (and the entire 'NY Pause' initiative) through at least May 15th. What might happen thereafter is the subject of broad speculation, but no subsequent executive order has yet been announced. Moreover, my efforts to infer from the Governor's rhetoric have grown increasingly unproductive. Some days, his commentary about the magnitude of the testing system required to begin phased reopening would suggest that such would not be possible before the end of June but on other days, his optimism about reopening certain regions of the State might indicate that some return to school after May 15th may be under consideration. I'm sorry that I can't offer more clarity on this matter. I will, most definitely, share any official announcement about a return to school with you immediately upon its release.

If we return to in-person instruction this year (and "if" is a very important qualifier in that stanza), students and parents should prepare themselves for school to look very different than it did prior to the March 13th closure. While I am equally unable to predict what social distancing and non-congregating requirements may still be in-place in May or June, it goes without saying that the traditional educational experience is impossible under these constraints. We have begun considering and preparing for a host of possible scenarios, and many of these are very challenging and would have a dramatic impact on schedules, class size, class location, dining, movement through the hallways, emergency drilling, recess, physical education, access to nursing services, restroom use, entry/exit from buildings, etc.. We are endeavoring to prepare for many possible eventualities, and we will be ready to react to that which is directed to us - whatever that might be, and whenever this might come.

Beyond "are we going to return to school this year?", the questions which I field most frequently concern specific events and activities. A complete summary of the status of events is beyond the scope of this message, but I am aware that the Teachers, Administrators, Advisors and Coaches who lead these have worked hard to keep students and parents informed about their statuses. With regards to those events with the broadest participation and attendance:

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that advances intellectual, physical, social, and cultural development.

- No official decision about graduation for the Class of 2020 has been made. The host venue has announced that all Summer facilities bookings have been cancelled, but the specific location of graduation is likely of secondary consideration to, if and when we will be allowed to assemble as a large group. I've already shared a direct communication with the Class of 2020, and they know that -one way or another -we will celebrate their special class, and that we will continue to include their Class Officers in our decisions.
- You may have read recently that two athletic Sections in NYS have already cancelled Spring interscholastic athletics. As of now, Section VII has not made such a determination, nor has the NYS Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHAA) yet announced statewide cancellation. A NYSPHAA decision is expected on April 27th.
- School budget votes and Board member elections have been postponed until after June 1st, but no specific date has yet been announced. From a practical perspective, these votes/elections would need to occur prior to the June 30th close of the fiscal year. June 9th is rumored to be the preferred date for these statewide votes, but this has not been officially announced, nor has any directive about the mechanics of these processes (ie., whether these will be conducted exclusively through absentee ballots) been sent.

I will close with a repeat of counsel which I've shared with you all previously: it is critical that students continue to participate in the remote instruction plan. Though nothing fully replaces in-person instruction, we are proud of the plan which has been developed, and students are surely now very comfortable with the daily instructional routine. As you know, we have converted to a pass-fail assessment model during this period of closure, and it is imperative that students participate daily in their instruction. Failure to participate puts in jeopardy academic promotion (including graduation), and can impact future academic placement. School and community personnel (from Teachers to Counselors to Administrators to Caseworkers to Police Officers) have worked tirelessly with families to ensure compliance with this State-directed mandate. Student engagement in our district, as compared to other districts and regions, has been excellent ... but everyone must remain vigilant about participating in daily activities and submitting required student work. We are nearing the 'homestretch' of the academic year, and I implore all students to stay dedicated to their studies.

Though I acknowledge that what we have lost in opportunity, we have gained in resilience, I look forward to the day when we can re-connect, in-person, nonetheless. Resilience is great, but right now, connections would be better.

Until then, I wish you continued health and comfort,



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