



# PLATTSBURGH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Jay Lebrun

Superintendent of Schools

49 Broad Street  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

Ph: (518) 957-6002

[jay@plattscsd.org](mailto:jay@plattscsd.org)

[www.plattscsd.org](http://www.plattscsd.org)

**April 3, 2020**

Good evening Plattsburgh CSD parents. I hope that this message finds you all healthy and upbeat during this difficult, prolonged crisis. I apologize in advance for the length of this message, but there is much important information that I wish to convey.

## **Grading**

During this school closure, our emphasis has been, quite appropriately, on student learning, participation, and effort. Together with parents, our faculty and administrators have worked hard to keep students engaged. Though remote learning cannot be a complete substitute for in-person classroom instruction, we are trying hard to advance through curriculum while maintaining core skills. To best focus on student engagement and learning, and in acknowledgement of that varying degree of student resources and opportunities which exist outside of the school setting, we have converted to a pass/fail system through the balance of this school closure.

At the secondary level, numerical grades reported as of 3/13/20 will be used for quarter 3 grades. At the elementary level, grading through 3/13/20 will be used as grades for the 2nd trimester. For both levels, no numerical grades will be used during the school closure, and a pass/fail system based on student participation/engagement and effort will be in effect through, minimally, the end of this school closure. At the secondary level, GPA and class rank will be based on work through 3/13/20. If school reconvenes this year, this approach to grading will be revisited.

This pass/fail approach will rely on the following grading attributes:

- i) effort: a measure of how hard students try (ie. have they completed checklists, tasks, activities, assignments, etc.).
- ii) participation: a measure of whether students contribute and interact during engagement opportunities (ie. do they attend video conference sessions, share their work and responses, etc.).

## **Attendance**

Remote education is not optional. It is mandatory, and has been directed by both the Governor and the State Education Department. Moreover, student attendance and work completion during this remote instruction period is critical in ensuring that students develop the skills necessary for success in subsequent education. Not attending and/or not completing work will have negative natural consequences as students navigate future education.

### MISSION

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

Teachers are keeping records of student participation/effort and engagement, and these will be used to track attendance. In order for a student to receive daily attendance credit, they must have completed an assignment, shared their work, emailed a response (or have their parent email a confirmation/response), etc.. Credit for this participation will automatically yield attendance credit for that day.

### **April Recess**

As you know, it has been directed from State authorities that remote instruction will continue through April recess. Students, parents, and teachers have worked incredibly hard to make our remote instruction successful, and I truly wanted for all parties to enjoy a much-deserved break. We will, of course, comply with the mandate that remote instruction continue through the scheduled break, and though the structure of daily instruction will be consistent and familiar for all, the content will be somewhat different. In an effort to relieve some of the stress that students, parents, and teachers have all experienced in conveying regular content via remote media, our district will shift focus to providing universal instruction in social/emotional/life skills during the week of April 13-17. For that week, education for all students (grades PK-12) will focus on this content. Teachers will not be providing individual class lessons, and instead, age-appropriate lessons in social/emotional/life skills will be offered. We've all worked hard to create a consistent, predictable daily instructional routine for students, and we don't want to abandon this structure, so Teachers will still be providing the daily video greeting, checklist, and daily discovery for students. While the structure of our instructional delivery will stay consistent, our content focus for that week will shift to social/emotional/life skills. Given what is transpiring in our increasingly-uncertain world, I view the timing of this focus as ideal.

### **Technology**

Given our collective increased reliance on technology, it is natural that issues will arise. In an effort to streamline our technology support for students, parents, and teachers, we have introduced two direct sources for assistance.

On the main page of the district's website ([www.plattscsd.org](http://www.plattscsd.org)), there is a link to a technology helpdesk, through which you can submit any questions or concerns (about hardware and software alike). Similarly, from Monday-Friday, 8am-3pm, one of the districts' technology integrationists will also be available by phone (number listed on website as well) to support you.

You may have already noticed that electronic communications from teachers will feature less attached files, and will instead rely on embedded links through which students and parents can access the same information. By having teachers save these files to the district's cloud storage system, and sharing hyperlinks through which these can be opened, we expect to relieve bandwidth issues being experienced by the district and by home users alike. The result should be faster, easier access to these files.

### **Miscellaneous**

- There is no indication yet about how the State will treat Regents' exams this Spring.
- Notification about AP test modifications have been sent to students by their AP teacher.

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- Breakfast and lunch meals will continue to be made available throughout the week of April 13-17 (ie. the scheduled April break).
- No announcement has yet been made about an extension of the statewide school closures beyond April 15th. Recent data and rhetoric about the spread of the infection might suggest that a return to regular school at that time is unlikely, but we will await a specific announcement by Governor Cuomo.

Finally, I will leave you for the weekend with this thought and news: some of our school nurses have begun the process of joining the ServNY medical volunteer corps. I know you join me in extending both gratitude and wishes for their safety as they serve our community through this crisis. These Hornets are emblematic of the selflessness and service which are hallmarks of our community, and we will think of them constantly as they bolster the taxed ranks of medical providers. Love and support to them as their roles evolve.

As always, we are here to help and support you. Please reach out to faculty, staff, or administration with any needs.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Lebrun". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a stylized "L".

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