



TYRONE

AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Soaring Forward to Explore, Challenge and Succeed
www.tyrone.k12.pa.us

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Dear TASD families –

First, I would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the many parents, community members, and staff who have been supportive in this very difficult and unprecedented situation. We are currently facing a crisis that brings with it a number of challenges that do not have easy answers, especially given the fluidity of the information available to us and the ever-evolving decisions at the state and federal levels. Also, I would like to thank the administrators and cafeteria staff who quickly came together to make a plan for and then, along with a number of staff and community volunteers, participated in providing over 2400 meals to our community's children this week. This continuing effort was among the most urgent concerns as families struggle to provide basic necessities while also coping with a loss of income, childcare, and resources.

To address criticism regarding what is being perceived as a lack of concern about students' continuing education by administrators, teachers, and staff, I feel that it is important to share some additional information with our families.

As stated in previous communications, the district is making plans to provide activities and resources for students. Yesterday, the first general list of resources was shared. Currently, we are under a two week closure and we are unsure of whether, or for how long, this closure will be extended. This uncertainty is one of the most difficult issues with which to deal. Additionally, the immediacy of the required closure, coupled with the fact that our district did not have students Friday nor students and teachers Monday prior to the closure, has added additional complications about how to get materials to students and provide direction for teachers while still acting responsibly to keep everyone safe.

In addition, we are currently unable to move forward with REQUIRING students to participate in instruction, as we would be violating the federal law dictating that we must meet the needs of all students. If every student cannot engage equitably with remote learning, then we cannot proceed with requiring lessons, taking attendance, or grading. Equal access includes, but is not limited to internet access, device access, special education, and English language learners. We are aware that not every student, nor staff member, has reliable internet access at home. We know that a few districts are beginning to give instructions about what were intended to be "Inclement weather on-line instruction" days that the state will count as school days; however, even some of these districts have begun to pull back on requirements in light of the law. Failure to meet the current laws could mean thousands of dollars in fines and/or litigation to the taxpayers of this community. One thing that has been confirmed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education is that the state assessments for the 2019-20 school year have been cancelled.



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As stated in my phone message on Friday March 20, we will be working remotely with staff to provide some optional experiences that will help keep students engaged while they are at home. In the meantime, in addition to the list of resources on our website, we recommend any practice of basic skills, review of previously learned material, reading, and exploring the many resources on the internet, including virtual tours of museums, zoos, and other exciting experiences. We are also realistic that this closure may last longer than two weeks. In the event that this is the case, we are laying the groundwork for finding ways to support students, families, and staff members within whatever legal means we are able.

If you have any other questions or additional concerns, please direct them to those who can accurately answer them – the district. Although we do not have all of the answers, we are providing the most comprehensive information available and will continue to post that for you as it changes. While the district phones indicate that we are closed, messages are being directed to the appropriate staff members to address.

Thank you again for your understanding and patience during these extraordinary times. We know that students' anxiety over the uncertainty of their education and many of the activities for which they are involved continues to grow. We need to work together to support our students.

Sincerely,

Leslie A. Estep