



HAMILTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

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March 11, 2020

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For Immediate Release

Hamilton Township School District Coronavirus Preparedness

Hamilton, NJ. In the last week, the Hamilton Township School District (HTSD) participated in a number of conference calls with the New Jersey Department of Health, as well as the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). The culmination of these meetings have allowed us to coordinate efforts regarding educating our students should a school or schools be required to close by order of the New Jersey Department of Health or the Hamilton Township Department of Health. It is important to note, that NO school district may “independently” make the decision to close and have that day count toward the 180 day requirement. Only in the event that a school district has a written directive from the Department of Health to close, can the day be counted if instruction is provided.

If HTSD were required to close a school or the district by order of the New Jersey Department of Health or Local Health Department, and our preparedness plan was implemented, remote learning from our students’ homes would count toward the required 180 days of school. Departments, schools and employees have worked together to develop plans and resources for instruction and operations of the district. The Department of Curriculum and Instruction is currently working with the Department of Student Services and our professional teaching staff to ensure that the needs of all learners are addressed within this plan. Our Business office is currently developing the necessary provisions for school nutrition planning with our Food Service Provider (as required).

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Scott Rocco, explained that, “the NJDOE has issued guidance on ‘remote learning’. The term remote learning is important because it takes into account that not all families have the ability to connect to the Internet through a device, if a school or schools need to be closed. On Monday, March 9th, building principals designated a time to ask students if they have a device and Internet access at home. This information was vital to the development of our remote learning plans.” The survey reported that approximately 87% of students have both a device and online access at home.

At this time, HTSD has a systematic framework for preparedness planning aligned to expectations of the NJDOE, and we are finalizing the document for submission to the Mercer County Executive County Superintendent. With this framework, our professional staff and administration are working collaboratively to develop a series of “remote” learning opportunities for our students that will offer a combination of on-line activities as well as traditional instructional activities (as required).

Within the schools, HTSD continues to implement an enhanced daily cleaning and sanitizing plan. This cleaning uses a combination of both mechanical and chemical cleaning phases that are focused on common touch points including door knobs, sinks, water fountains, computer keyboards, student desks, chairs, cafeteria tables, chairs, etc. Additionally, we have deployed more hand sanitizer dispensers throughout our facilities in order to provide our students and staff with continuous access to disinfectants as needed.

On March 2, 2020, HTSD established a [webpage](#) entitled Coronavirus Information on the district's website and each school's webpage. This page is continually updated with information and correspondence from the district. In addition to information being provided on the new webpage, Dr. Rocco has also communicated with faculty and staff through the district's email system. One of the many concerns being addressed is that HTSD understands that the news about COVID-19 may be difficult for our children to hear and they may have many questions. HTSD offered the following resource from the [National Association of School Psychologists on Talking to Children about COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#). This resource offered guidelines on talking to children about the coronavirus.

Moving forward, HTSD encourages our school community to:

- visit our [website](#) for updates as more information becomes available;
- follow our Social Media feeds for updates **@WeAreHTSD** on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram;
- update their contact information on the [School Messenger](#) and [Parent Portal](#) systems. If you have not already completed the HTSD Back To School Portal, please make sure to do so by following the directions [here](#). We highly recommend that all parents/guardians provide their email and [opt-in for district text updates](#);
- cover your cough and sneeze into your sleeve (not your hands);
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth (if possible);
- wash your hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, especially if you are coughing or sneezing.

Please know that there is nothing more important to us than ensuring the health, safety and security of our students, faculty, and staff. We will *continue* to collaborate effectively with our Township and State Health Departments. We look forward to continuing to partner with our community members and will provide additional updates and information as it becomes available.

If you have any questions or concerns about this information please contact [Laura Geltsch](#). We thank you for your continued support and partnership.

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