

MARCH 24, 2020

SAFETY & HEALTH INFO FROM NANTUCKET COTTAGE HOSPITAL

AN UPDATED Message to the Community from the Superintendent & Deputy Superintendent

Dear Nantucket School Community,

The challenges that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is presenting for our world, our country, our Commonwealth and the community of Nantucket are unprecedented and rapidly evolving. Information is coming in, daily and sometimes hourly, from the federal government, the Governor's office, the Massachusetts Department of Education and our Nantucket Town officials; and the Nantucket Public Schools are responding as best as we can. At this point, we know that our in-school operations have been postponed to April 6th, but we fully expect that this will be extended soon to the end of April. We also know that the novelty of school being closed has worn off quickly, for both students and their families. The education of our children has been interrupted, and we share your concern for that. We are equally concerned about the impact on our students' physical, social and emotional well-being.

Upon first learning of a two-week school closing, the administration and faculty in our schools quickly sprang into action to provide learning packets (for many grades) and digital resources for all students to supplement their learning. Now that we know this closure is more than two weeks, our task has changed. We must now raise the expectations of our educators to provide a greater array of learning opportunities as we enter this week and next; and they have already stepped up to meet that challenge. Many teachers have been in touch with students through Google Hangouts and Zoom. For those staff members not familiar with these platforms, we have been using this week to educate them. We have an excellent team of educators collaborating every day to create a solid framework that will provide guidance to staff and families around remote learning expectations if our school closure is extended.

There are, of course, many challenges to this effort. Infrastructure is one hurdle, and we have worked hard to get electronic devices into the hands of students that need them. The larger challenge in this new world of remote teaching and learning is to balance how much is too much and how much is too little. Learning at home is a very different prospect than learning in school. To that end, we are all forging a path through this unfamiliar territory of educating children together. As every day goes by, we are learning more about how best to do this. What was sufficient last week, we must build upon next and every week thereafter. We are confident that you will, if you have not already, see teachers, teaching assistants, counselors, nurses and many other school personnel reaching out to students and their families to help us all navigate our way through these uncharted waters. We are seeing our school community rally like never before to serve our island's children.

Respectfully,

W. Michael Cozort, Superintendent

Elizabeth Hallett, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent