

**Hillsborough Township Public Schools
COVID-19 - Communications to the Community**

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School Messengers

June 12, 2020 - Nutritional Services/Reopening Planning/Shout Outs and Woo Hoos

Good Afternoon HTPS Community!

Yesterday marked the 100th day since New Jersey's first case of COVID-19 and we are almost at our 60th day of virtual learning (not counting holidays) with two (2) days left to go in the 2020-2021 school year!

Wow, it really is difficult to believe that we are down to the last two (2) days of school and likely our final School Messenger for the school year. Together, as a school community, we got through a tremendously difficult time and I am confident that we will continue to move forward with resolve, perseverance, and optimism.

Nutritional Services: The last day of food distribution will be Tuesday, June 16th, 2020. Further information regarding alternate food distribution sites during the summer will be available on our website and sent out via School Messenger shortly.

Reopening Planning: Preliminary plans for the reopening of schools have already begun. While we continue to await guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), we are moving forward with planning for a variety of scenarios. We will keep the community posted as September draws near.

Shout Outs and Woo Hoos: As I reflect upon the last 12 weeks, one of my favorite Nelson Mandela quotes comes to mind ~ *It always seems impossible until it is done.* While I suspect I will be reminding myself of this quote as we consider plans for a safe reopening of schools in the fall, it certainly has merit for what we have all accomplished since March 16.

Thank you to our students who took the initiative to stay engaged in their learning, reached out to classmates and teachers, and embraced this new experience with openness, flexibility, and patience.

Thank you to our parents who weathered the COVID-19 storm balancing work and parenting responsibilities while assisting your child(ren) with schoolwork. This has not been an easy road for anyone and your patience, support, and encouragement was and continues to be appreciated.

Thank you to our staff who seamlessly transitioned to virtual learning within a matter of days and enhanced the learning process for students with each extension from the Governor's office! Your commitment to the students of Hillsborough Township, while balancing home responsibilities, do not go unnoticed.

Here is to a relaxing summer filled with family, friends, and fun! Don't forget to read, read, and read some more!

Be safe, stay strong!

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.



June 5, 2020 - Graduation/When and How to Make Masks/Request from NJDOE/Resources for Talking to Your Children About Racism/Summer Reading-Summer Work/Extended School Year/Municipal Alliance Virtual Presentations/Ending the Year Strong

Good Afternoon HTPS Community!

Wow, we are down to the final seven (7) days of school. I absolutely cannot believe we are here already. A plan for Chromebook collection and materials collection will be forthcoming, so be sure to look for that email.

Graduation: They say that you can tell a real smile because it reaches a person's eyes and after seeing our seniors participating in the videotaping for our virtual graduation ceremony, this became apparent very quickly!

The frustration we all experienced surrounding graduation was palpable. Between the advocacy of the Board of Education at the State level and the behind the scenes assistance from the Hillsborough Township Office of Emergency Management, Hillsborough Township Department of Health, and the Hillsborough Township Police Department, we were able (over three days) to videotape almost 600 seniors receiving their diploma covers, turning their tassels, and tossing their caps! Cars were decorated, confetti balloons were popped, and pictures were taken! While not our typical celebration, it was certainly a celebratory experience! A videographer was onsite taping the event, as was a photographer, who took portraits amid custom backdrops for our seniors. It was very easy to get caught up in the excitement and we all did!

A HUGE SHOUT OUT and a special WOO HOO to our high school administration for organizing a truly "down-to-the-minute" event, the senior class advisors, especially Ms. Ellen Weller, who exhibited as much excitement for the last senior on the last day of filming as she did for the first senior on the first day of filming, and our maintenance and buildings and grounds crews for the set-up and breakdown of the entire event each day, as well as for assisting with directions, traffic flow, and all around general help!

We would also like to send a special thank you to the parents of our seniors who helped to make the experience a celebratory one! Our students are your treasures and we are so thankful to have shared in their academic successes.

Finally, we will continue to monitor the guidelines into early July for other opportunities to celebrate our seniors or for them to be together before heading off into their futures.

When and How to Use Masks: Now that we are seeing a loosening of the restrictions, it may be helpful to take a quick look at the proper utilization of masks. Click [here](#) for information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Request from the New Jersey Department of Education: The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has requested that districts share the following information with parents about the reopening of schools. The information includes a link to complete a survey, which closes on Monday, June 8:

Dear Parents,

Thank you for your heroic efforts to support your children's schools and the learning process during closings due to the coronavirus pandemic. The New Jersey Department of Education (Department) continues preparations for the next stages of school opening, and hearing from parents is a Department priority. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey at the following link: [NJDOE parent survey](#)<[New Jersey Department of Education COVID-19 Parent Survey](#)>. We appreciate receiving your responses by Monday, June 8th.

If you have any questions, please contact the Department's Office of Civic and Social Engagement at civicanssocial@doe.nj.gov<<mailto:civicanssocial@doe.nj.gov>>.

Estimados Padres,

Gracias por sus esfuerzos heroicos para apoyar las escuelas de sus hijos y el proceso de aprendizaje durante los cierres debido a la pandemia de coronavirus. El Departamento de Educación de Nueva Jersey (Departamento) continúa los preparativos para las próximas etapas de la apertura de la escuela, y escuchar a los padres es una prioridad del Departamento. Por favor, tómese unos minutos para completar la encuesta en el siguiente enlace: [NJDOE encuesta para padres](#)<[Departamento de Educación de Nueva Jersey COVID 19 Encuesta para Padres](#)>. Agradecemos recibir sus respuestas antes del Lunes 8 de Junio.

Si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor póngase en contacto con la Oficina de Compromiso Cívico y Social del Departamento en civicanssocial@doe.nj.gov<<mailto:civicanssocial@doe.nj.gov>>.

Resources: In an effort to assist in speaking with your child(ren) about racism, we have included the following resources.

Talking to your children about race:

- [Talking to Kids About Race](#) - National Geographic
- [How to Talk to Kids About Race and Racism](#) - Parent Toolkit

Reading for Children:

- National Council of Teachers of English: [Affirming Black Boys outside the Context of Police Brutality](#)
- [embracerace: 31 Children's books to support conversations on race, racism and resistance](#)

Summer Reading/ Summer Work: Prevent “summer slide”, grab a glass of lemonade, your sunglasses, and take a look at the reading lists to find something interesting or different. Strategic choice of reading materials may open up new worlds for your child(ren) to discover. The 2020 summer

reading options and assignments for grades 2-12 can be found on the district [website](#). Summer reading = summer fun!

Extended School Year (ESY):

At this time, this year's Extended School Year (ESY) program will be offered virtually. Please be on the lookout for an email next week to check your parent portal which will have details pertaining to your child's ESY assignment.

Virtual Presentations Sponsored by Municipal Alliance: The Municipal Alliance is sponsoring three virtual events on the following topics: 15-Minute Child Break, Virtual Narcan Training, and Vaping: What Do We Really Know About It? Please click [here](#) for additional information.

Ending the Year Strong: With the end of the school year only days away and with summer right around the corner, it is much more difficult to keep the energy for school work alive! I know I am experiencing it at home with my own children. If your child(ren) have outstanding assignments, please continue to offer encouragement to submit the work so that teachers can accurately assess the learning. Remember to remain in communication with teachers, counselors, and building administration if there is a problem or you require extra support. We are almost there!!!

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to your building administrator with any questions.

Be safe, stay strong!

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



May 29, 2020 - Graduation/MIS-C Associated with COVID-19/Vaccinations During COVID-19/2020 Census/Kindergarten and CAP Information/Ending the Year Strong

Good Afternoon HTPS Community!

I am a bit shocked to realize that as we come to the end of May, round the corner into June, and begin to count down the last 12 days of school, that we are actually to this point in a quite unusual school year.

Graduation: I know it seems that I continue to repeat myself as information about graduation is shared. We recognize the frustration surrounding all issues related to graduation and we, too are also feeling incredibly frustrated. In fact, we have been advocating behind the scenes on behalf of our senior class and we continue to receive information and guidance (and clarification to the guidance) from the NJ Department of Education (NJDOE) daily and often several times per day. As the situation continues to evolve, please be on the lookout for additional communication from Ms. Bingert.

Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), MIS-C is a condition where various body parts can become inflamed. While experts are unsure what causes MIS-C, children (ages 2 through 21) diagnosed with the condition had the virus that causes COVID-19 or had contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19. While most children diagnosed with MIS-C have recovered, with proper medical care, the condition may be very serious and even fatal. Please click [here](#) for additional information about MIS-C.

Vaccinations During COVID-19: Well-child health visits have subsided considerably since the COVID-19 pandemic became a reality in our country resulting in the administration of fewer vaccines. Fewer vaccines leaves children and others at-risk for preventable diseases. If you have missed well-child visits and are now delayed on the recommended vaccination schedule, please be sure to speak with your child(rens) doctor as soon as possible to get back on track. Please click [here](#) for additional information.

Census: In the midst of everything else happening around us, it is understandable that certain items fall on the priority list. Of all the counties across the state, Somerset County ranks second only to Hunterdon in terms of census return! The self-response phase of census data collection has been extended through October 31, so if you haven't completed the online, phone, or mailed document, please take a few moments to do so. It really is quick, easy, and available in more than 13 languages! Remember that the census will NEVER request your social security number, bank or credit card number, money or donations, or anything on behalf of a political party. Responding to the census affects the amount of funding Hillsborough receives, how we plan for the future, and our representation in government. Specifically, data from the 2020 Census is used to: **ensure public services and funding for schools**, hospitals, and fire departments, plan new homes and businesses and improve neighborhoods, and it even determines how many seats New Jersey is allocated in the House of Representatives. Click [here](#) to take the 2020 Census.

Kindergarten Registration/CAP Program: Kindergarten [registration](#) continues for families with a child who will turn five on or before October 1, 2020. Additionally, there are still openings in most of our elementary schools for the Children at Play (CAP) program. The CAP program is a tuition-based, child-care program that provides an opportunity for children to remain in school for a full day. Children in the [CAP program](#) attend kindergarten in the morning, the CAP program in the afternoon and dismiss at the end of the school day. Catholic Charities provides aftercare in all of our elementary schools and offers a 10% discount to CAP families.

Ending the Year Strong: As stated above, the end of the school is nearly upon us and as the temperature rises, so does the temptation to stop doing schoolwork. Teachers are aware of this and work diligently to keep students engaged in their learning. Please encourage your (child)ren to remain vigilant in their learning and complete all of their assignments. Remember if a problem comes up, be sure to reach out to the teacher as soon as possible for assistance. In order for the days to count toward the 180 day requirement, the district must be able to verify that assignments are being completed. Schools and districts must submit attendance data to the state by June 30, 2020. If a student is not completing assignments, s/he must be recorded as absent. Teachers are working extremely hard to ensure learning continues, but students must engage in the learning and do their part. Please help us to help your children end this school year positively.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to your building administrator with any questions.

Be safe, stay strong!

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



May 22, 2020 - Close-Out/Reopening Plans, Refunds, Graduation, Amsterdam Tennis Courts, HHS Robotics Virtual Workshops

Good Afternoon HTPS Community!

It is difficult to believe that Memorial Day is upon us. While it may not be exactly as we'd like it to be, it is still a chance to unwind and unplug.

Close-Out / Reopening Plans: A process for closing out the school year, retrieving personal items from lockers and classrooms and a mechanism to return Chromebooks, textbooks, instruments, etc. has been developed and will be communicated to staff and the community shortly (if it has not already been communicated). While there is a very tight timeframe, we are confident that with everyone's assistance and cooperation, all will go well. Decisions were based upon many variables including guidance from the state and the easing of certain restrictions currently imposed by the Governor's Executive Order No. 122.

Refunds: Senior Parking, Subscription Busing, CAP, Mealtime Accounts:

- **Mealtime refunds (Food services):** All Mealtime reimbursement/transfer requests should be made directly to TKlein@htps.us.
- **Subscription Busing:** Subsequent to Board discussions, the refunds are currently being processed and are expected to be mailed out by the end of June.
- **Senior Parking:** Subsequent to Board discussions, the refunds are currently being processed and are expected to be mailed out by the end of June.
- **CAP:** Subsequent to Board discussions, all refunds have been processed.

Graduation: As shared in earlier communication, we know that this very important milestone is on the minds of many families. It is also at the forefront of our minds and while specifics will be shared very soon, please know that plans are underway. We continue to receive information and guidance from the NJ Department of Education (NJDOE) daily and often several times per day. The one consistent variable is that with each new communication, something is different and often contradicts what was previously communicated. In this ever-changing environment and with many of the decisions either changing or being taken out of our hands, please know that all possible options are being explored to commemorate this special event.

Amsterdam Tennis Courts: As of last week, the Amsterdam tennis courts are open and available to the public. However, it came to our attention that groups exceeding the governor's latest guidelines were

at the courts, sans a face covering and not practicing physical distancing. Remember that it is imperative, for everyone’s health and safety, to practice all physical distancing recommendations and wear a mask.

Hillsborough High School’s Robotics Team: The HHS Robotics Team is hosting virtual workshops for students in grades K-5. The team is running videos on their YouTube channel every Tuesday and Thursday. Members of the Robotics team provide step-by-step directions and explain the science behind the activity. The videos are posted at 4:00 PM on the dates listed below:
www.youtube.com/RoboRaider2012

Tuesday, May 26	Making a Origami star	<u>Making an Origami star</u>
Thursday, May 28	Blowing Up Balloons With CO2 Magic Milk - Color Symphony	<u>Balloons</u> <u>Magic Milk</u>
Tuesday, June 2	Building Rube Goldberg Machines	<u>Building rube goldberg machines</u>
Thursday, June 4	Making a paperclip float Making a pin-wheel	<u>Making a paperclip float</u> <u>Making a pin-wheel</u>

Monday, May 25, is Memorial Day, therefore, schools are closed and no virtual learning will be taking place. We look forward to reconnecting with everyone on Tuesday, May 26. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to your building administrator with any questions.

Be safe, stay strong and enjoy the long Memorial Day weekend!

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
 Superintendent of Schools



May 15, 2020 - Emergency Closing Days/School Calendar, Close-out/Reopening Plans, Graduation/Graduate Together 2020, Nutritional Services, Amsterdam Tennis Courts, Closing Thoughts

Good Afternoon HTPS Community!

Another week is officially behind us and I am confident that we are all welcoming the warmer weather with open arms and hearts. Even amidst the uncertainty, we all continue to look forward to sunnier days ahead.

Emergency Closing Days/School Calendar: As you are aware, Governor Murphy extended the school closure through June 30. The Board decided on Monday, May 11, 2020, to move the four (4) unused

emergency closing days to the end of the year and close school four (4) days early. Click [here](#) for the revised school calendar.

Close-Out / Re-Opening Plans: A process for closing out the school year, retrieving personal items from lockers and classrooms and a mechanism to return Chromebooks, textbooks, instruments, etc. is under development. Additional information will be forthcoming and will be based upon guidance from the state and the easing of certain restrictions currently imposed by the Governor's Executive Order No. 122.

Graduation: We know that this important milestone is on the minds of many families. It is also at the forefront of our minds and while specifics will be shared soon, please know that plans are underway. We continue to receive information and guidance from the NJ Department of Education (NJDOE) daily and often several times per day. The one consistent variable is that with each new communication, something is different and often contradicts what was previously communicated. In this ever changing environment and with many of the decisions either changing or being taken out of our hands, please know that discussions are taking place daily and all possible options are being explored.

Graduate Together 2020: According to their website, Graduate Together is honoring the class of 2020 with a one-hour prime time special airing on ABC, CBS, FOX, and NBC, tomorrow night (Saturday, May 16) at 8:00 PM. Multiple online platforms will be streaming the event as well. For additional information please visit <https://graduatetogether2020.com>.

Nutritional Services: Just a reminder that during the COVID-19 pandemic, **ALL** students may receive meals free of charge as long as we are able to affirm enrollment status in our schools. As explained previously, while it is not necessary for children to accompany their parents, it is important to have their POS numbers readily available.

Amsterdam Tennis Courts: The Amsterdam tennis courts are now open and available to the public. Remember to practice all social distancing recommendations and wear a mask.

Closing Thoughts: The realities of working from home (WFH) are sinking in. The days seem to begin earlier and end later. "Let me just take a quick look at my email before I . . . ", or "yes, we can eat in a moment, let me just quickly return this call" . . . only to discover that two (2) hours later I have missed dinner and my children's heads have hit the coziness of their pillows. As diligent as we are in maintaining routines for our typical workdays, we need to remember that closing out the work day is just as important for our children and ourselves. Julie Winkle Giulioni, co-author and speaker offers shutdown rituals to assist us in balancing our work and personal lives. Shutdown rituals trigger our brains and bodies to shift to another mode and include closing the door to the area in which you are working, saying "goodnight" to co-workers, reflecting upon the day, cleaning and wrapping up your work space in preparation for the next morning, and maybe even phoning a friend. While this may be a case of "easier said than done" the benefits of shutting down are far more important than we may realize.

I would like to take a moment to thank everyone for his/her/their congratulations and good wishes on my appointment as the Superintendent of Schools. I am humbled and very grateful for the opportunity to serve the students, faculty, staff and the greater Hillsborough Township community.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to your building administrator with any questions.

Be safe, stay strong, and keep the hope alive!!!

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



May 11, 2020 - Reminder: Nutritional Services/Servicios nutricionales

We were recently informed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, students may receive meals free of charge even if the eligibility criteria for free and/or reduced lunch is not met, as long as we are able to affirm enrollment status in our schools. As explained previously, while it is not necessary for children to accompany their parents, it is important to have their POS numbers readily available.

Additionally, If your employment situation has recently changed as a result of COVID-19 and you believe your child(ren) may be eligible for free and/or reduced lunch, please complete the food service application and do not hesitate to reach out to the Business Office at tklein@htps.us with questions or concerns. If you are unable to drive to the grab & go location at the high school, please reach out to your school nurse or building administrator for assistance.

Nos informaron recientemente que durante la pandemia de COVID-19, los estudiantes pueden recibir comidas de forma gratuita, incluso si no se cumplen los criterios de elegibilidad para el almuerzo gratis o reducido, siempre que podamos afirmar el estado de inscripción en nuestras escuelas . Como se explicó anteriormente, aunque no es necesario que los niños acompañen a sus padres, es importante tener sus números de ID disponibles.

Además, si su situación laboral ha cambiado recientemente como resultado de COVID-19 y cree que su (s) hijo (s) pueden ser elegibles para almuerzo gratis o reducido, complete la solicitud de servicio de alimentos y no dude en comunicarse con la Oficina Comercial en tklein@htps.us con preguntas o inquietudes. Si no tiene transporte para llegar a la escuela secundaria, comuníquese con la enfermera de la escuela o el administrador del edificio para obtener ayuda.

May 8, 2020 - Emergency Closing Days and School Calendar/Lunch Accounts, Retrieval of Personal Items and Chromebook Return/Graduation/Summer Programs/HMS Battle of the Bands

Good Afternoon HTPS Community!

It has been quite a week! It seems that the needs continue to change daily and sometimes even hourly as decisions are made at the federal/state levels and trickle down to school districts. We are all facing daily challenges and doing our best to stay engaged, help to keep our students engaged in the virtual learning environment, and continue to balance our own work/home-life responsibilities. While it is

impossible to know what each of our families are dealing with, we send positive thoughts and remind you that we are here to assist in any way we can.

Emergency Closing Days/School Calendar: As you are aware, Governor Murphy extended the school closure through June 30. The Board will make final decisions on the four (4) unused emergency closing days and will discuss it at the Board meeting on Monday evening (5.11.2020).

Lunch Accounts/Retrieval of Personal Items/Chromebook Return: A process for refunding the lunch accounts for all students, retrieval of personal items from lockers and classrooms and a mechanism to return Chromebooks, textbooks, instruments, etc. is being developed. Additional information will be forthcoming and will be based upon guidance from the state and the easing of certain restrictions currently imposed by the Governor's Executive Order No. 122.

Graduation: We know that this important milestone is on the minds of many families. It is also at the forefront of our minds and while specifics will be shared soon, please know that plans are underway. Additionally, districts were informed that guidance surrounding graduation ceremonies and celebrations would also be forthcoming.

Summer Programs: At this time no additional information regarding summer programs, including Extended School Year (ESY) and summer camps is available. Upon receipt of information from the Governor's office and guidance from the NJ Department of Education (NJDOE), we will be sure to inform the community. However, the two-week Summer Enrichment program **will not** be offered this summer.

We have been in contact and will remain in contact with the Hillsborough Township Recreation Department and Catholic Charities, as they also use our facilities for summer programs.

HMS Wind Ensemble-Finalist in the Rutgers Battle of the Bands: There is still time to vote for our HMS band as one of five (5) finalists in the Rutgers Battle of the Bands competition. Please remember to vote once per day from now until May 17. Every vote every day counts. Please listen to their performance and cast your vote!

Please know that we do not take lightly the mission that is before us ~ to educate the students of Hillsborough Township Public Schools. While it is inevitable that there will not be consensus on all decisions, please know that every decision made is done so thoughtfully and with the best of intentions based upon the information we have at the time, as the effects of the decisions are often crucial and far reaching. It is a privilege to educate and serve the 7,300 students that help to make Hillsborough what it is.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to your building administrator with any questions.

Happy Mother's Day to all!

Be safe and stay well!

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent



May 1, 2020 - Weekly Update: Nutritional Services/Subscription Busing/Kindergarten Registration and CAP Program/Emergency Closing Days - District Calendar/Governor's Principles to Reopen/Social Distancing/HMS Wind Ensemble/Shout Outs

Good Afternoon HTPS Community!

Wow, I cannot believe that today is May 1 and another week of virtual learning is complete!

Nutritional Services: If your employment situation has recently changed as a result of COVID-19 and you believe your child(ren) may be eligible for free and/or reduced lunch, please complete the [food service application](#) and do not hesitate to reach out to the Business Office at tklein@htps.us with questions or concerns.

While the details are forthcoming, we are happy to share information about our recent collaboration with Hillsborough YMCA on the distribution of food (including fresh produce) to those families eligible for free or reduced lunch services. As more information is received, we will be sure to share it with the community.

If you are unable to drive to the grab & go location at the high school, please reach out to your school nurse or building administrator for assistance.

Additionally, we were recently informed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, students may receive meals free of charge even if the eligibility criteria for free and/or reduced lunch is not met, as long as we are able to affirm enrollment status in our schools. As explained previously, while it is not necessary for children to accompany their parents, it is important to have their POS numbers readily available.

Subscription Busing: While we continue on our virtual learning / teaching journey, we are actively working on re-entry plans, as well as our typical re-opening processes. One of the processes involves subscription busing for the 2020-2021 school year. If you have not already received it, be on the lookout for an initial communication which is scheduled for release today. The interest form is due on or before Friday, May 29, and the first payment is due on or before June 30. Questions regarding subscription busing may be emailed to subscriptionbusing@htps.us.

Kindergarten Registration: As many may be aware, kindergarten registration was postponed in March and has been rescheduled for Monday, May 4, through Friday, May 15. We are pleased to share that we have been able to enhance our online registration process allowing us to complete the process during this school closure period. Please visit our [website](#) for more information about registering your child(ren) for kindergarten for the 2020-2021 school year.

Children at Play (CAP) Program/Lottery: The CAP (Children at Play) program is a tuition-based, half-day child care enhancement program for kindergarten students. The program provides an opportunity for

a child to remain in school for a full day with a highly-qualified, certificated teacher. CAP ends at the end of the full school day. [Click here for more information on the CAP program and how to enter the lottery.](#)

Emergency Closing Days/School Calendar:

We will not be utilizing an unused emergency closing day on Tuesday, May 26 (as stated on the calendar). As we receive additional updates from Governor Murphy, the Board will make final decisions on the four (4) unused emergency closing days.

Governor Murphy's Principles to Re Open: Earlier this week, Governor Murphy shared his vision outlining his vision with Six (6) Key Principles titled "[The Road Back: Restoring Economic Health Through Public Health](#)"

Social Distancing: Now that the Governor has relaxed some of the restrictions for State and County Parks, it remains increasingly important to reiterate that, as COVID-19 grows in our community, please be sure to practice social distancing as recommended. This includes avoiding crowds, staying home when ill, and maintaining a six (6) foot distance between others. It is more important than ever to eliminate social situations, including playdates, sleepovers, and visiting with friends. Everyone is encouraged to spend time outside, however, it remains important to maintain at least six (6) feet between you and others outside of your family.

HMS Wind Ensemble-Finalist in the Rutgers Battle of the Bands: As shared at Monday evening's Board of Education Meeting, our HMS band needs our help! As one of five (5) finalists in the Rutgers Battle of the Bands competition, they need your vote to win a VIP trip to campus to perform at the Rutgers football half-time show this fall. You can vote once per day from now until May 17 and every vote every day counts. Please listen to their performance and cast your vote!

Shout-Outs and Woo Hoos: Did you know that Congress declared March 7, 1980, as National Teacher Day? According to the National Day Calendar, *"The National Education Association continued to observe Teacher Day on the first Tuesday in March until 1985 when the National PTA established Teacher Appreciation Week as the first full week of May."*

In honor of Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4 - May 8) a special shout out to all of our teachers and those who work with our students each and every day! Now, perhaps more than ever before, communities are recognizing the amazing work in which teachers engage daily. Teaching is truly a vocation and Hillsborough is proud of every one of our teachers who consistently go above and beyond!

Help us to spread the word that our teachers are:

- Talented
- Energetic
- Adventurous
- Creative
- Hard working
- Engaged
- Resourceful
- Student-centered

As we wind down another week and hopefully disconnect for the weekend, I would like to leave you with some sage advice that I received from the Child Mind Institute. They share *Coronavirus Daily Tips* and yesterday's message focused on self compassion. They remind us that this is a new situation for everyone and that we must have realistic expectations for ourselves, forgive ourselves for making mistakes, accept that we will not have all the answers every time, and remind ourselves that we are all doing our best. While the advice is certainly good advice, it is also easier said than done. Be kind to yourselves and each other. It will all be okay ~ we will come out of this just as we went into this. . . together!

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to your building administrator with any questions.

Be safe and stay well while enjoying the beautiful weather to come,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent



April 24, 2020 - Weekly Update: Nutritional Services/Kindergarten Registration/Children At Play/Graduation/Conversation and Coffee with the Superintendent

Good Afternoon HTPS Community!

Congratulations on another week of virtual learning! There are a few reminders/updates that I would like to share.

Nutritional Services: In an effort to be more efficient and ease the burden for families with young children, those students eligible for breakfast and/or free/reduced lunch may join us (Monday-Friday) at the **main entrance to the high school from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.** While children **DO NOT** have to accompany their parents, it is important to have their POS numbers readily available.

Please be aware that this is a drive-up service only. As Sodexo is practicing the social distancing recommendations, they request that only one parent at a time walk up to the table and to wait until the person before them has gotten back into the car before the next hops out. Sodexo will be providing both breakfast and lunch daily to all eligible families during this timeframe.

If your employment situation has recently changed as a result of COVID-19 and you believe your child(ren) may be eligible for free and/or reduced lunch, please complete the [food service application](#) and do not hesitate to reach out to the Business Office at tklein@https.us with questions or concerns.

Kindergarten Registration: With input from our elementary principals, data manager and secretarial staff, we are pleased to share that we have been able to enhance our online registration process allowing us to complete the process during this school closure period. Custom questions have been added to the application along with necessary forms that can be completed and securely uploaded to your application. The open registration application that you may have already completed will allow

you to set up a username and password enabling you to revisit the application and upload documents when you have them readily available.

If you have already pre-registered your child(ren) for kindergarten, you will receive an email from your child(ren)'s school over the next few days with instruction on how to set up a username and password and finalize the registration process. If you have not pre-registered and wish to do so, please complete the pre-registration form. Kindergarten Registration has been rescheduled for Monday, May 4 through Friday, May 15.

Children at Play (CAP) Program/Lottery: The CAP (Children at Play) program is a tuition-based, half-day child care enhancement program for kindergarten students. The program provides an opportunity for a child to remain in school for a full day with a highly-qualified, certificated teacher. CAP ends at the end of the full school day. [Click here for more information on the CAP program and how to enter the lottery.](#)

Graduation: As shared in an earlier message, we were recently notified by the RAC that all events have been cancelled. While we have secured the same date elsewhere (although we believe this venue will also cancel all events), we continue to seek possible alternatives to our typical graduation ceremony if it becomes necessary to do so to ensure public health and safety.

A final determination regarding our commencement ceremonies will not be made quite yet, however, please be assured that in the event our ceremony does need to be cancelled, we will do our best to ensure that the occasion is celebrated with all of the pomp and circumstance that such an important events warrants within the restrictions set forth by the governor's office.

Conversation & Coffee with the Superintendent: Conversation and Coffee is scheduled for May 6 at 9:00 AM. If you are interested in joining the conversation, please complete this form. You will receive an email with information on how to connect to the conversation via the email you provide.

Turnaround Time: As our support staff personnel and administrators are also working remotely, the turnaround time on requests, paperwork, and processing may take longer than usual if the information is inaccessible. While many requests can be handled in a timely manner, it is also very likely that others may take more time to handle. Your patience and understanding is appreciated.

To those who have been personally impacted by COVID-19, please let us know if there is something we may do to assist. One never knows how this crisis is truly affecting individuals/families and we are finding that our staff is also not immune to these challenges. Remember to take care of yourselves and each other.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to your building administrator with any questions.

Be safe and stay well,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent



April 22, 2020 - Educación de COVID-19 para la comunidad latina

Buenas tardes,

Aquí tenemos información importante para los hispanohablantes de Hillsborough. Por favor, continúa practicando hábitos saludables para ayudar a desacelerar la propagación del COVID-19.

Saludos cordiales.

[Letter to Community](#)

[Lo Que Necesita Saber](#)

[Infographic](#)

[Mejores Practicos](#)

[CDC Social Media Kit](#)

April 17, 2020 - Weekly Update/Noticias de la Semana

Good Afternoon HTPS Community!

Well, we made it through week four of virtual learning and our first week back after spring break! By now everyone is also aware that Governor Murphy extended school closures through May 15. School districts across the state continue to receive guidance on sustaining the virtual learning environment while addressing the needs of students and staff, parents and families.

Report Card Release: Our students have reached the end of the third marking period and are rounding the bend into the fourth and final marking period of the 2019-2020 school year. The original release date for report cards was Friday, April 24, however the date has been adjusted to Monday, May 4 to provide students additional time to complete and turn in missing / incomplete work due to the transition to a virtual learning environment. While there will absolutely be a level of flexibility extended to students who have had difficulty during this transitional time frame, it is very important that communication with your child's (rens) teachers take place.

Graduation: As parents and family members of our high school seniors know, our 2020 commencement ceremony was scheduled to take place at the Rutgers Athletic Center (RAC). While unfortunate, we were notified by the RAC that all events have been cancelled. We have secured the

same date elsewhere (although we believe this venue will also cancel all events) and are also seeking possible alternatives to our usual graduation ceremony if it becomes necessary to do so to ensure public health and safety.

As many of our long-standing, traditional senior activities have been postponed and /or cancelled, a final determination regarding our commencement ceremonies will not be made quite yet, however, please be assured that in the event our ceremony does need to be cancelled we will ensure that seniors have access to what they need for whatever their future holds.

Mental Health Helpline: In his address yesterday, Governor Murphy indicated that the State's Mental Health Helpline (866-202-4357) is available for those exhibiting feelings of anxiety, stress, and hopelessness. As the effects surrounding COVID-19 are far reaching and present differently in each of us, please do not hesitate to reach out to the helpline or to your child's(rens) counselor. No one has to go through this alone, we **are** in it together.

Thank you parents and students who recorded a flipgrid message to staff members. Please take a moment to click on the link for an uplifting experience. It will be sure to bring a smile to your face. Flip Grid <https://flipgrid.com/9158eca7>

Personal Protective Equipment- Strategies & Instructions: Please click [here](#) for information on how to wear and wash a face cloth and even how to make your own.

Essential Personnel Childcare: As you may be aware, most childcare facilities have also been closed due to COVID-19, however, there are facilities that may open, via specific application processes, to provide childcare for essential personnel. To that end, please see the attached letter from the Greater Somerset County YMCA.

Schools represent a central entity to the daily lives of families and communities. Oftentimes, schools are at the heart of a community and therefore, relied upon to assist in supporting the community in a variety of ways. Schools embody much more than daily instruction and as diligently as we work and as hard as we try, much of what is important about schools cannot be fulfilled in the same way in a virtual learning environment.

I know that personally, when I think about the weeks ahead, it can become overwhelming. The blurring of lines between the personal and the professional become blurrier. Sometimes it helps to remind myself that this new "temporary normal" is indeed temporary (even if it does not always feel that way) and there are many things that remain the same ~ things such as our values, our purpose, our commitment, and our willingness to communicate.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to your building administrator with any questions.

Be safe and stay well,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent



17 de abril de 2020

Buenas tardes ¡Comunidad HTPS!

¡Logramos pasar la cuarta semana de aprendizaje virtual y nuestra primera semana de regreso después de las vacaciones de primavera! Todos también saben que el gobernador Murphy extendió el cierre de escuelas hasta el 15 de mayo. Los distritos escolares de todo el estado continúan recibiendo guía sobre cómo mantener el entorno virtual de aprendizaje y las necesidades de los estudiantes, los empleados, los padres y las familias.

Récord de Notas: Nuestros estudiantes han llegado al final del tercer período de calificaciones y están acercando al cuarto y último período de calificaciones del año escolar 2019-2020. La fecha original para las boletas de calificaciones fue el viernes 24 de abril, sin embargo, la fecha se ajustó al lunes 4 de mayo para dar a los estudiantes tiempo adicional para completar y entregar el trabajo perdido / incompleto debido a la transición a un entorno de aprendizaje virtual. Aunque habrá un nivel de flexibilidad que se extenderá a los estudiantes que hayan tenido dificultades durante este período de transición, es muy importante que tenga lugar la comunicación con los maestros de su hijo(a).

Graduación: Como saben los padres y los familiares de nuestros alumnos de último año de secundaria, nuestra ceremonia de inicio de 2020 estaba programada para llevarse a cabo en el Rutgers Athletic Center (RAC). Desafortunadamente, el RAC nos notificó que todos los eventos han sido cancelados. Hemos asegurado la misma fecha en otro lugar (aunque creemos que este lugar también cancelará todos los eventos) y también estamos buscando posibles alternativas a nuestra ceremonia de graduación si es necesario hacerlo para garantizar la salud y la seguridad públicas.

Como muchas de nuestras actividades tradicionales se han pospuesto y / o cancelado, todavía no se tomará una determinación final con respecto a nuestras ceremonias de inicio. Sin embargo, en caso de que nuestra ceremonia sea cancelada, vamos a asegurará que los estudiantes tengan acceso a lo que necesitan.

Línea de ayuda de salud mental: En su discurso de ayer, el gobernador Murphy indicó que la línea de ayuda de salud mental del estado (866-202-4357) está disponible para aquellos que muestran sentimientos de ansiedad, estrés y desesperanza. Como los efectos que rodean a COVID-19 son de largo alcance y se presentan de manera diferente en cada uno de nosotros, no dude en comunicarse

con la línea de ayuda o con el consejero de su hijo. Nadie tiene que pasar por esto solo, **estamos** juntos en esto.

Gracias a los padres y estudiantes que grabaron un mensaje de flipgrid a los miembros de la escuela. Tómese un momento para hacer clic en el enlace para una experiencia edificante. Seguramente te hará sonreír. Flip Grid <https://flipgrid.com/9158eca7>

Equipo de protección personal: estrategias e instrucciones: haga clic [aquí](#) para obtener información sobre cómo usar y lavar un paño para la cara e incluso cómo hacer el suyo.

Cuidado de niños de empleados esenciales: La mayoría de las instalaciones de cuidado de niños también se han cerrado debido a COVID-19, sin embargo, hay instalaciones que pueden abrir, a través de procesos de solicitud específicos, para proporcionar cuidado de niños a los empleados esenciales. Con ese fin, consulte la adjunta carta del Somerset County YMCA.

Las escuelas representan una entidad central para la vida cotidiana de las familias y las comunidades. Las escuelas están en el corazón de una comunidad y, por lo tanto, dependen de ellas para ayudar a apoyar a la comunidad en una variedad de formas. Las escuelas incorporan mucho más que la instrucción diaria y con la diligencia con la que trabajamos y con tanto esfuerzo como intentamos, gran parte de lo importante de las escuelas no se puede cumplir de la misma manera en un entorno de aprendizaje virtual.

Sé que personalmente, cuando pienso en las próximas semanas, puede ser abrumador. El desenfoque de las líneas entre lo personal y lo profesional se vuelve más borroso. A veces es útil recordar que esta nueva "normalidad temporal" es de hecho temporal (incluso si no siempre se siente así) y hay muchas cosas que siguen siendo las mismas, como nuestros valores, nuestro propósito, nuestro compromiso y nuestra voluntad de comunicarnos.

Como siempre, no dude en comunicarse con el administrador de su edificio si tiene alguna pregunta.

Esté seguro y manténgase bien,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Superintendente interino



April 13, 2020 - Digital Learning Guidelines/Aprendizaje Digital

Good afternoon HTPS parents and students,

I hope everyone had a chance to disconnect from technology and reconnect with each other over spring break.

As we prepare for the next several weeks of flexible learning and begin to incorporate other methods of connecting with your child(ren), we want to be sure that everyone remains safe in his/her online environment.

During this mandated school closure, HTPS is utilizing a digital environment and platform options that enhance equity and enable our schools to engage, share, and participate in a collaborative learning environment where applicable and reasonable. The Google Classroom platform (being utilized by many of our teachers) allows students and staff members to communicate safely within a structured framework, while providing access to online instructional tools. Your child's teacher may offer video conferencing as an instructional tool to support learning. The optional use of video conferencing is specifically for the timeframe schools are closed due to the health-related crisis.

While no problems have been brought to our attention, students must consider their school accounts an extension of the classroom and it is VERY IMPORTANT to remember that the same rules apply. The rules of courtesy and respect that are established in school are also expected during this time. Parents are encouraged to stress with their child(ren) the importance of digital citizenship and following the code of conduct.

Policies and procedures located on the district website and within student handbooks will also apply to our digital learning environment during this flexible learning time, including:

- [2361- Acceptable use of Computer Networks/Computers and resources](#)
- [3283- Electronic Communications between Staff Members and Students](#)
- [4283- Electronic Communications between Support Staff Members and Students](#)
- [5516- Use of Electronic Communication and Recording Devices](#)
- [7523 - School District Provided Technology to Pupils](#)

Due to privacy and confidentiality issues, only students using their @htps.us account will have full access to the Google Classroom. Additionally, to ensure the privacy and safety of our students and staff, as well as to ensure the privacy of your home environments, please:

- do not record or take pictures of the meet/conference/hangout/chat, etc.
- do not post or stream to any social media accounts
- utilize school appropriate language in speech and/or written text
- wear school appropriate clothing
- ensure that the location and background of your environment is appropriate for school

Remember that all the same rules apply and if a student is not adhering to policies and/or codes of conduct s/he will no longer be invited to participate in the meet/conference/hangout/chat, etc.

Thank you for your support as we continue along this sojourn together!

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.

Acting Superintendent

13 de abril de 2020

Buenas tardes,

Mientras preparamos para las próximas semanas de aprendizaje flexible y comenzamos a incorporar otros métodos de conexión con su(s) hijo(s), queremos asegurarnos de que todos permanezcan sanos y salvos cuando usen el internet.

Durante este cierre escolar, HTPS está utilizando programas digitales que mejoran la equidad y permiten que nuestras escuelas participen en un entorno de aprendizaje colaborativo. La plataforma Google Classroom (utilizada por muchos de nuestros maestros) permite a los estudiantes y empleados comunicarse de una manera segura, y a la misma vez dando acceso a herramientas de instrucción en línea. El maestro de su hijo puede ofrecer videoconferencias como una herramienta de instrucción para apoyar el aprendizaje. El uso opcional de videoconferencia es solamente para este periodo de tiempo en lo cual las escuelas están cerradas debido a la crisis nacional.

Los estudiantes deben considerar sus cuentas escolares como una extensión de la clase y es MUY IMPORTANTE recordar que se aplican las mismas reglas. Las reglas de cortesía y respeto que se establecen en la escuela también se esperan durante este tiempo. Los padres deben enfatizar con sus hijos la importancia de la ciudadanía digital y de seguir el código de conducta.

Las políticas y procedimientos ubicados en el sitio web del distrito y en los manuales de los estudiantes también se aplicarán durante este tiempo de aprendizaje flexible, que incluye:

- [2361- Acceptable use of Computer Networks/Computers and resources](#)
- [3283- Electronic Communications between Staff Members and Students](#)
- [4283- Electronic Communications between Support Staff Members and Students](#)
- [5516- Use of Electronic Communication and Recording Devices](#)
- [7523 - School District Provided Technology to Pupils](#)

Debido a problemas de privacidad y confidencialidad, sólo los estudiantes que usen su cuenta @htps.us tendrán acceso completo a Google Classroom. Además, para garantizar la privacidad y seguridad de nuestros estudiantes y empleados, así como la privacidad de su hogar, por favor:

- no grabe ni tome fotos de la reunión / conferencia / hangout / chat, etc.
- no publique ni transmita a ninguna cuenta de redes sociales
- Utilice lenguaje apropiado para la escuela en el habla y / o texto escrito
- Use ropa apropiada para la escuela
- Asegúrese de que la ubicación y el ambiente de su hogar sean apropiados para la escuela

Recuerde que se aplican las mismas reglas y si un estudiante no cumple con las políticas y / o códigos de conducta, ya no será invitado a participar en la reunión / conferencia / hangout / chat, etc.

¡Gracias por su apoyo durante estos tiempos difíciles!

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.

Acting Superintendent

March 27, 2020 - Weekly Update/Information on Spring Break

Good Afternoon HTPS Community,

This message comes to you as we wrap up our second week of flexible learning. It has truly been an experience that none of us are sure to forget any time soon. Boards of Education and everyone connected with education in some way, including parents, have stepped up and continue to either educate our students or provide support in doing so. All of this is occurring as district operations continue. While lengthy, please be sure to read this entire message, as important information is contained throughout.

School Closing Update: As you may already be aware, in his address yesterday, Governor Murphy affirmed that all elementary and secondary schools shall remain closed to students as long as the executive orders remain in effect. He was very clear that the decision to reopen schools lies with him and further stated that he does not even intend to assess the reopening of schools until at least April 17, 2020. We will be sure to keep the community updated with any additional information as it becomes available.

Spring Break: After much deliberation among the administration and with the leadership of the two unions (the Hillsborough Education Association and the Hillsborough Principals and Supervisors Association), and without further guidance from the state, we will be having our originally scheduled spring break starting Saturday, April 4 and resuming online instruction on Monday, April 13. We will not be utilizing an unused emergency closing day (as stated on the calendar) to extend Spring Break through Monday, April 13. Please use this time as an opportunity to catch up and maybe get out in your yard to enjoy some nice weather.

We All Need to Do Our Part: While Spring Break is just that, a break to not sit in front of a computer screen for distance learning, we are concerned that students and parents might see this as an opportunity to return to some normalcy. It is not. We want to stress that it is more important than ever that we continue to follow the guidance that the governor and CDC have outlined with respect to preventing the spread of the virus. Please continue to practice PHYSICAL DISTANCING of greater than six (6) feet and continue to stay at home. We encourage you to gather with extended family and friends VIRTUALLY. Please understand that these measures are necessary to stop the spread of this virus so that we **may** be able to return to in-person learning during this school year.

State Assessments: Earlier this week, the Governor announced that New Jersey will cancel the administration of state assessments for the Spring 2020 testing window. While the effects of doing so will impact various aspects of education, the State is working to mitigate the unintended consequences of doing so and has assured us that guidance will be forthcoming.

Nutritional Services: In an effort to be more efficient and ease the burden for families with young children, those students eligible for breakfast and/or free/reduced lunch may join us at the **main entrance to the high school from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM**. While children **DO NOT** have to accompany their parents, it is important to have their POS numbers readily available.

Please be aware that this is a drive-up service only. As Sodexo is practicing the social distancing recommendations, they request that only one parent at a time walk up to the table and to wait until

the person before them has gotten back into the car before the next hops out. Sodexo will be providing both breakfast and lunch daily to all eligible families during this timeframe.

If your employment situation has recently changed as a result of COVID-19 and you believe your child(ren) may be eligible for free and/or reduced lunch, please complete the [food service application](#) and do not hesitate to reach out to the Business Office at tklein@htps.us with questions or concerns.

Child Care for Essential Staff: We were asked to provide the following information to our community: Parents and guardians in need of child care can contact the **Child Care Resource and Referral Agency** in their county. **CCR&Rs** will have the most up to date information on available care options and subsidies.

Emergency Closing / Snow Days: More information about these days will be included in a future communication.

Board of Education Meeting: The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 13. Be on the lookout for additional information.

Finally, I am being very deliberate in encouraging you to adjust expectations for what you and your child(ren) are able to accomplish in a remote work day. I know that this is something I struggle with personally and, therefore, I completely understand the challenges many of us are facing daily. Take some time to rest, reflect, and relax each day and over the weekend as the state-wide restrictions continue. We have all expressed that it is often the little things that mean the most and during this time creating memories and documenting them adds some fun to the experience.

Your continued support and patience is appreciated. As always, do not hesitate to reach out to your building administrator with any questions or concerns as we gear up for week three (3) of flexible learning before we round the curve toward spring break.

With respect and gratitude,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent

March 26, 2020 - Nutritional Services Reminder

Dear HTPS community,

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the following information regarding nutritional services available for students who qualify for free or reduced lunch services.

In an effort to be more efficient and ease the burden for families with young children, those students eligible for breakfast and/or free/reduced lunch may join us at the **main entrance to the high school from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM**. While children **DO NOT** have to accompany their parents, it is important to have their POS numbers readily available.

Please be aware that this is a drive-up service only. As Sodexo is practicing the social distancing recommendations, they request that only one parent at a time walk up to the table and to wait until the person before them has gotten back into the car before the next hops out. Sodexo will be providing both breakfast and lunch daily to all eligible families during this timeframe.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to your building administrator with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent

March 24, 2020 - Notification of Student from Amsterdam

Good Afternoon HTPS Community,

We have been notified by the Hillsborough Township Health Department that a student from Amsterdam Elementary School has tested positive for COVID-19. The student, who has no known COVID-19 contact, became ill on Saturday, March 14, therefore, please be sure to monitor the health of your child(ren) through Saturday, March 28.

While this specific case came to our attention, it is very likely that there could have been cases in the school community prior to this time. This being the case, it is important to be vigilant in basic hygiene, mindful of the symptoms, and to continue social distancing as recommended.

Please note that the Hillsborough Township Health Department continues to monitor all cases and is working with the State to identify any potential contacts for follow-up. Visit the [Hillsborough Township website](#) for the most up-to-date information from the health department.

Symptoms of coronavirus disease include a fever, cough, and shortness of breath and may appear two (2) to fourteen (14) days after exposure. Please visit the CDC website for additional information about [symptoms of COVID-19](#).

We recognize just how disconcerting this information may be, however, as discretion is paramount to any sensitive situation, we are unable to share any additional information with the community. Our good wishes are extended to those families personally dealing with the virus.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent

March 23, 2020 - Updates: Possible Duration of Closure, March 25 Inservice Day, NJSLA Waiver

Good Evening HTPS Community!

During this restrictive time in our country, I hope everyone was able to enjoy some time outside this weekend taking in the sunshine and breathing in some fresh air. Remember that it is essential to take care of yourselves, as well as each other, as we work through this crisis as a community, state, and country.

First, let me apologize on the front side for the length of these messages. I realize that they are lengthy, however, the information continues to come to us quite quickly and I want to be sure to provide you with the most up-to-date information as possible at the time of each message.

Duration of School Closures: As you are aware, Governor Murphy issued an Executive Order that closes all schools in New Jersey indefinitely. As superintendents do not have the authority to open schools, all Hillsborough Township schools will remain closed until the executive order is lifted and guidance about reopening schools is provided. Therefore, we all ought to be thinking ahead and planning for a closure beyond this week and likely much longer. All days of instruction via flexible learning will count toward the mandated 180-day requirement.

You may also be aware that an emergency declaration has been issued for Somerset County. This declaration allows for several relief measures, including, but not limited to, the county requesting assistance from the state and federal government.

District-wide In-Service Day: The district-wide in-service day has been rescheduled for **Wednesday, March 25**; therefore there will be no flexible learning taking place. This day was intentionally selected so our teachers have time to connect with colleagues, give some thought to long-range planning, and then have follow-up time to reconnect with colleagues and administrators, if necessary.

As we are all managing our personal work-at-home situations while balancing home and family, it seems more important than ever to maintain a consistent and reasonable school and work schedule during the Monday through Friday week. Please remember that your child(ren)s days (and yours, too) need to begin and end as would a “regular” day; in this case, four (4) hours of flexible learning. This also means that our staff need time to regroup, step away from the computer, and recharge as well.

New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA): The US Department of Education has announced a waiver process that will allow states to opt out of standardized testing requirements for the current school year. We are awaiting direction from the NJ Department of Education and will keep you posted.

High School Specific Items: High school students and parents of high school students ~ please be on the lookout for further information about AP Exams and working papers from the counseling office.

Student Absences: As attendance must be recorded daily, please do not forget to follow the same protocols for calling your child(ren) absent for the day.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Day: Social emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others,

establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) invites school and district administrators, school board members, community partners, parents, and local police to participate in an international movement to celebrate the first inaugural International Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Day on **March 27, 2020**. Be on the lookout for more information, including [ideas and resources](#) to support the development of SEL; which is much needed during this COVID-19 global pandemic.

Shout-Outs and Woo Hoo's: A special shout out to our technology department who continues to assist in troubleshooting problems for students, parents, and staff alike and continuously provides support for the vast array of resources available to our school community in the wake of this pandemic. Additionally, a huge woo hoo to our custodial and maintenance crews who have managed the mammoth job of deep cleaning and disinfecting our schools and offices. I am confident that others join me in recognizing the value of their contribution to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of all who enter our facilities.

Social Distancing: It is increasingly important to reiterate that, as COVID-19 grows in our community, please be sure to practice social distancing as recommended. This includes avoiding crowds, staying home when ill, and maintaining a six (6) foot distance between others. It is more important than ever (and likely easier to avoid as recreational businesses are closed) to eliminate social situations, including playdates, sleepovers, and visiting with friends. Everyone is encouraged to spend time outside, however, it remains important to maintain at least six (6) feet between you and others outside of your family.

The safety and well-being of our students, staff, and community remains our first priority and while the challenges are epic, there is no doubt that we will persevere as a school community and support all learners to reach their potential via our current flexible learning plan. Thank you to all of our students, parents, staff members, and community members for their efforts in supporting the needs of all learners during this period of school closure. We will continue to make adjustments for efficiency purposes as necessary and to ensure we are moving forward in terms of accountability for the NJ Department of Education. Your patience and understanding is appreciated as we continue this journey.

The Mental Health Association of NJ has opened their Disaster Mental Health Helpline to assist anyone struggling with a current situation or COVID-19. Please call **(877)294-HELP(4357)** for emotional support, guidance and mental health referrals as needed.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to staff with any questions or concerns.

Be well,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent

March 19, 2020 - Week Wrap Up

Happy First Day of Spring HTPS Community,

As we enter the final days of our first week of our Flexible Learning Plan, I would like to extend a huge shout out to ALL of our students, staff members, administrators, and parents! What an exciting and interesting week it has been! We've had video messages from teachers to students, students to teachers, administrators to students and parents, and administrators to each other! We've had dance parties, drop everything and read, read-alouds, piano performances, and St. Patrick's Day celebrations. We've conducted virtual meetings, consultations, and conference calls. . . lots and lots of conference calls. Our teachers are thinking outside of the box, being creative, trying new things, and doing their best to keep students engaged and motivated. I believe that, together, we have managed to turn lemons into lemonade, so kudos to us! Please know that your positive messages help to keep the motivation high and the staff going strong.

I understand that everyone must be on information overload and I ask that you bear with us as we all work to strike a balance between too much and just enough. We want to be sure that parents understand exactly how to assist students. We also want to be sure that students have what is necessary to continue learning at home as we make the shift to this new, albeit temporary, paradigm for our learners.

There are some housekeeping items I want to share as we wrap up this week and begin thinking about the next. Firstly, the scheduled district-wide inservice day originally scheduled for tomorrow (Friday, March 20) is cancelled and is a regular school day for students and staff. Secondly, kindergarten registration, originally scheduled to begin on Monday, March 23, and run through Friday, April 3, has been postponed. If you have not already done so, I would like to encourage parents to pre-register their child(ren). We will reach out when we are ready to invite you in to complete the registration process. Click [here](#) for information on registering your child(ren).

As we continue to take steps to sanitize our buildings and grounds and comply with social distancing recommendations, all school playground equipment will be unavailable until further notice.

In an effort to be more efficient and ease the burden for families with young children, there will be a slight adjustment to the nutritional services for those students eligible for breakfast and/or free/reduced lunch. Beginning Monday, March 23, the pick up location will be at the **main entrance to the high school from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM**. While children **DO NOT** have to accompany their parents, it is important to have their POS numbers readily available.

This is drive-up service only. As Sodexo is practicing the social distancing recommendations, they request that only one parent at a time walk up to the table and to wait until the person before them has gotten back into the car before the next hops out. Sodexo will be providing both breakfast and lunch daily to all eligible families during this timeframe.

Some have inquired about the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA). At this time, districts are awaiting guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). Once received, updates will be provided to the community as soon as possible.

By now I suspect everyone has heard that a Hillsborough resident has tested positive for COVID-19. Please click [here](#) for information:

As previously stated, it remains important to reiterate the following information:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Do not forget between your fingers and under your nails. Use alcohol-based sanitizer if soap and water are unavailable.
- Prevent the spread of germs by covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Frequently and routinely clean and disinfect objects, including door knobs and cell phones.
- Stay home if you are ill or exhibiting respiratory systems.

Additionally, as COVID-19 grows in our community, please be sure to practice social distancing as recommended. This includes avoiding crowds, staying home when ill, and maintaining a six (6) foot distance between others. It is more important than ever (and likely easier to avoid as recreational businesses are closing) to eliminate social situations, including playdates, sleepovers, and visiting with friends. Everyone is encouraged to spend time outside, however, it remains important to maintain at least six (6) feet between you and others outside of your family.

Communities are truly microcosms of society and, as such, we are being faced with very complex challenges. At the moment, everything is unpredictable and we are not in control of our daily lives. I find that it helps if we continue to focus on exactly how to thrive during such uncertain times. I find myself coming up with ways to do so with my own family and there are many resources out there to help. Take a moment to peruse the following websites:

- [CDC](#)
- [Second Step](#)

Do not hesitate to reach out to teachers, building administrators, or district administrators with any questions, comments, or suggestions. While the emails have grown exponentially, please be patient and someone will get back to you.

Be safe and stay well,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent

March 16, 2020 - Board of Education Meeting

Good Afternoon HTPS Community,

In order to address concerns regarding COVID-19, along with the best interest of its community members in mind, and the statement from the Governor to abide by the curfew recommendation of 8:00 p.m. through 5:00 a.m., the Hillsborough Township Board of Education's March 16, 2020, meeting shall take place as scheduled, beginning at 7:30 p.m., with the following modifications:

First, the Board will be live-streaming the meeting so that individuals who wish to virtually attend the meeting--without coming to the building--will be able to do so. The Board will post a link to the live stream on its website (www.htps.us) before the meeting.

Second, please note that Board members and necessary staff may participate in the meeting remotely via telephone conference call (they will be able to fully participate, and members of the public will be able to hear all of their comments).

Third, the Board respectfully requests that members of the public use their best judgment in determining whether or not they should attend the meeting in person. Kindly note that both the World Health Organization and Center for Disease Control recommend that individuals should stay home if they feel unwell, and if members of the public have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, they should seek medical attention, call in advance, and follow the directions of their local health authority. If members of the public wish to attend the meeting in person, rather than viewing it through the live stream, please note that seating will be limited to a total of 50 people (all seats will be positioned at least six feet apart from another seat, in order to practice social distancing). Members of the public who wish to make a public comment, but are not attending in person, should submit their comments in writing (either email at boe@htps.us or hard copy). The Board appreciates these comments, and acknowledges and reviews all such communications.

If the events unfold based upon the Governor's address this afternoon, we will revisit our plan and reach out to the community.

Thank you again for your patience as we move forward with the logistics surrounding public meetings during a pandemic.

Wishing everyone good health in the weeks ahead,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent

March 15, 2020 - Notification of Positive COVID-19 Case in Montgomery Township

Good Afternoon HTPS Community,

I received notification from the Montgomery Superintendent, Ms. Mary McLoughlin, that three (3) members of a family in Montgomery have tested positive for COVID-19. This information was confirmed by Hillsborough's Deputy Health Officer/Health Educator. While not Hillsborough residents, one child was in DC Gymnastics (located in Hillsborough) on March 4, 2020 and came down with symptoms on March 9, 2020. Montgomery Health Department has said any contacts would be low risk and symptoms ought to be monitored until March 18, 2020.

Additionally, it was shared that all of the registrants received an email from DC management, however since they have an open gym, we believe it is prudent to let everyone know. If you or someone you know utilizes the gym, please visit the following website for information:

<https://www.hillsborough-nj.org/all-non-essential-meetings-have-been-canceled/>

As previously stated, it remains important to reiterate the following information:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Do not forget between your fingers and under your nails. Use alcohol-based sanitizer if soap and water are unavailable.
- Prevent the spread of germs by covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Frequently and routinely clean and disinfect objects, including door knobs and cell phones.
- Stay home if you are ill or exhibiting respiratory systems.

Please be sure to practice social distancing as recommended. This includes avoiding crowds, staying home when ill, and maintaining a six (6) foot distance between others. While very difficult, especially as the weather improves, it is important to eliminate social situations including, but not limited to, playdates, sleepovers, birthday parties, going to the movies, shopping at the mall, and visiting with friends. While it is absolutely okay to spend time outside, please maintain at least six (6) feet between you and others outside of your family.

Finally, it seems that Governor Murphy will be ordering that all schools be shut down until further notice to minimize exposure to the coronavirus. This order is likely to occur some time tomorrow. I will continue to communicate information as it is received.

Again, please take a look at our [previous communication](#) and peruse the resources available on COVID-19 at the [CDC website](#), specifically [NJDOH's COVID-19 Information for Schools and Businesses webpage](#).

Be safe and stay well,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent

March 13, 2020 - Nutritional Services Available

4:45 p.m.

Dear HTPS community,

While the intent is not to inundate your inboxes with every update as notification is received, the following information is important to clarify nutritional services available for students who qualify for free or reduced lunch services for the next two weeks. Please see the updated answer to the questions below.

- **Will breakfast be available for students who qualify for free or reduced meals at Sunnymead Elementary School during this time?**
 - Yes, beginning Monday, March 16, the district will provide grab and go breakfasts at Sunnymead School (the only qualifying school) from 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Be sure to bring your POS# indicating free or reduced status.

- **Will lunch be available for students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch during this time?**
 - Yes, beginning Monday, March 16, grab and go lunches will be provided for all district students qualifying for free and reduced lunch at the main entrance overhang at Hillsborough High School daily from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Be sure to bring your POS# indicating free or reduced status.

Enjoy your weekend,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent

March 13, 2020 - Notification of Health-related Closure Effective March 16, 2020

Dear HTPS community,

What an unprecedented time we are currently experiencing as a community and I would like to thank all who have taken the time to share thoughts, concerns, and suggestions over the past several weeks. District administrators have been in contact with our local health department, our district physician, New Jersey Department of Education officials, Somerset County superintendents, and other professionals in order to best address the situation confronting us.

As information and guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) is updated, we, too must adjust our plans and decision-making protocols. While currently there are zero confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Hillsborough, there have been cases confirmed throughout Somerset County. Additionally, you may be aware that Governor Murphy has declared a “public health emergency” and has recommended that large gatherings (250 people or more) be cancelled to leverage social distancing practices. Therefore, effective Monday, March 16, all Hillsborough Township Public Schools will be closed for a **minimum** of two weeks and will follow a flexible learning schedule. The scheduled March 20 in-service day is now a flexible learning day for all students and staff.

All extra curricular activities, including athletic events, are postponed or cancelled until further notice. Additionally, all use of facilities by outside organizations are cancelled until further notice. We will continue careful monitoring as details surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic unfold and provide periodic updates to the community; especially as the extension of school closures or additional revisions to the school calendar may be necessary.

As you are already aware, today, Friday, March 13 is a half day for our students. Teachers will have the opportunity to communicate their expectations to students regarding the logistics of our flexible learning plan. Students will also have the ability to retrieve their belongings and give our teachers a chance to distribute any items they will need for an extended school closure.

Additional information about the expectations and plan for flexible learning will be sent within 48 hours and additional information will be provided by either your building administrator and/or teacher(s). There are many questions for which answers are elusive, and we will continue to be faced with challenges that are impossible to predict, however, we will continue to make our best efforts to support our students and staff. While not ideal, it is certainly an opportunity to work beyond our comfort zones and ensure that in accordance with guidelines from the NJ Department of Education, these flexible learning days will count as days toward the 180-day requirement.

Below are answers to some commonly asked questions:

- **When will schools reopen and how will spring break be affected?**
 - At this time we have been advised to plan for a minimum closing of two (2) to four (4) weeks. Two weeks brings us to March 30, which is the week before spring break, which begins on Monday, April 6. More information will be forthcoming on the reopening of schools.
- **Will extra / co- curricular activities such as athletics, concerts, plays, junior prom and other events be affected?**

- All extra / co- curricular activities such as athletics, concerts, plays, junior prom, and athletics are postponed until further notice. Please note that this includes our final two performances of *Footloose* (this weekend) at Hillsborough High School. All patrons who have purchased tickets this weekend will be contacted directly by a member of the HHS Theatre department.
- **Will transportation be provided to my child(ren) who attend an out-of-district placement?**
 - No, students will not be transported to out-of-district schools.
- **Will lunch be available for students during this time?**
 - Based upon the guidance provided by the Department of Agriculture, lunch will not be provided at this time. Should the situation change, we will immediately notify the community.
- **Will Catholic Charities run if schools are closed?**
 - No. Catholic Charities will not be available if schools are closed.
- **Will students have access to the building if they forget something?**
 - If the state mandates the closure of all schools, then students will not have access to the building.
 - If schools are closed by the county as a proactive measure for the health and well being of our staff and students, then students may be able to have access to the building.
- **When will I know about the flexible learning plan provided for my child(ren)?**
 - Communication about the expectations and plan for flexible learning will be sent within 48 hours and additional information will be provided by either your building administrator and/or teacher(s).
- **Will outside organizations have access to our school district facilities during this closure?**
 - No. Since our school buildings are closed, school district facilities are not available for use by outside organizations. This measure is being taken for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to the ability for our custodial and maintenance staffs to complete the necessary cleaning and disinfecting regimen in preparation for the reopening of schools.

During the two (2) weeks schools are closed, the Health Department recommends that, in addition to continuing all general good hygiene practices, please refrain from frequenting areas where large groups of people are congregating or where social distancing cannot be suitably practiced.

I would like to emphasize that at the time of this writing, there have been **no** confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Hillsborough Township. I cannot adequately express my genuine appreciation to the Hillsborough community, (including our students, staff members, and administrators) for your flexibility, patience and support during this extraordinary time. I will keep the community informed and updated of our plans as quickly and effectively as possible over the next few days and weeks.

For additional information about speaking to your child(ren) about COVID-19, please click on [this link](#) from the Child Mind Institute.

Sincerely,
 Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
 Acting Superintendent of Schools

March 12, 2020 - Notification of Half Day Schedule for March 13, 2020

Good Afternoon HTPS community,

I apologize for the late notice and understand the impact a change in the school calendar has on our families and community overall. Please know that these decisions are made with great thought and discussion about what is best for our students and staff.

To that end, tomorrow, Friday, March 13, 2020, we will once again follow a half day schedule for students. PM preschool and kindergarten programs will be in session, however no lunches will be served. Please continue to check your email throughout the evening in the event any further important updates need to be communicated.

The situation across the county and state regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is rapidly developing and changing. We continue to do our best to communicate as quickly as possible. I appreciate your patience and understanding during this pandemic as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Thank you,
Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
Acting Superintendent of Schools

March 11, 2020 - Notification of Half Day Schedule - March 12, 2020

Good evening HTPS community,

Hillsborough Township School District recognizes the seriousness of COVID-19 and its impact on our community. We continue to closely monitor information and guidance on the transmission of COVID-19 and actions being taken by organizations, colleges, and hospitals locally, nationally and internationally. At this time there is no recommendation to close schools. As stated in previous correspondence, we have been notified by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) that if there are mandated, public health related school closures, districts that provide access to approved alternate instructional methods during the closure will be in compliance with the 180-day requirement. To that end, students will follow a half day schedule on Thursday, March 12, 2020 in order to provide teachers the opportunity to develop a reasonable, flexible learning framework that afternoon. Additional planning will take place during the previously scheduled inservice day on Friday, March 20. For your convenience, click [here](#) for half-day session hours. Reminder that lunch is not served on half days.

Absences continue to be monitored and appropriate school-based precautions are in place. At this time, we are not cancelling local field trips or school activities. However, please continue to reinforce the use of preventative measures including frequent handwashing, avoid close contact with people who are exhibiting symptoms, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Additionally, the National Association of School Psychologists has a [parent resource](#) for speaking with your child(ren) about Coronavirus that may be helpful. Should your child(ren) become upset or display increased anxiety or concern about these current events, please encourage him/her to seek the assistance of a trusted adult, including the school counselor.

More information will be provided as the situation warrants. Thank you for your flexibility with the adjustment to the school calendar as we plan for this unpredictable situation.

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
Acting Superintendent of Schools

March 6, 2020 - COVID-19 Update/Directives from NJDOE and NJDOH

Good Afternoon HTPS Community,

Preparedness has been at the forefront of everyone's mind since our last correspondence and it seems that we receive a multitude of emails daily about the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Throughout the week, we have collaborated with superintendents across the county and state; spoken with our local health department, and continued preparations with our administrative team.

As outlined in previous communications, it is important to reiterate the following information:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Do not forget between your fingers and under your nails. Use alcohol-based sanitizer if soap and water are unavailable.
- Prevent the spread of germs by covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Frequently and routinely clean and disinfect objects, including door knobs and cell phones.
- Keep your child home if s/he is ill or exhibiting respiratory systems.

The Hillsborough Township School District is following the advice of the New Jersey Department of Education, as well as state and local health departments. The New Jersey Department of Health is monitoring information received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and is working closely with our local health department to monitor the situation and is preparing guidance documents for schools and childcare facilities. New Jersey school districts received new guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education on March 5 emphasizing that the most important thing for schools to do at this time is to plan and prepare, in the event that "schools may be asked to close preemptively or reactively . . ." The NJDOH guidance identifies school closure as a potential strategy to limit transmission within a community; therefore, in the event a board of education is provided a written directive by either the NJDOH or the health officer of the jurisdiction to institute a public health related closure, the board of education may utilize other methods to provide instructional services to enrolled students.

Please be assured that we are working to develop realistic and reasonable plans to provide instruction and support students in the event of a district-wide, long-term mandatory closure. There are many pieces to this puzzle that must include equitable access to instruction for all students including provisions for special education and related services for students with disabilities. We will share timely information as we develop a plan that best addresses the needs of the students and staff of Hillsborough.

Additionally, any day in which students impacted by a public health-related closure have access to alternate instructional methods consistent with the guidance provided by the NJDOE, will count as a day in which the Board of Education has provided public school facilities toward its compliance with the 180-day requirement in accordance with New Jersey statute. However, they are very clear that this flexibility to count a day on which public school facilities are closed toward the Board of Education's statutory 180-day requirement applies strictly to public health-related school closures and not to any other type of closure or other days on which public school facilities are not made available. Any closures made, absent a written directive from either the NJDOH or the health officer of the jurisdiction, will not count.

As stated in earlier correspondence, absences continue to be monitored and appropriate school-based precautions are in place. At this time, we are not cancelling local field trips. Should your child(ren) become upset or display increased anxiety or concern about these current events, please encourage him/her to seek the assistance of a trusted adult, including the school counselor.

Again, please take a look at our previous communication and peruse the resources available on COVID-19 at the CDC website, specifically [NJDOH's COVID-19 Information for Schools and Businesses webpage](#).

Please know that the safety of our students and staff remain at the forefront of any decision that is made.

Have a safe and enjoyable weekend,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent

February 28, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

Good Afternoon HTPS Community,

The safety of our students and staff is a top priority in Hillsborough Township and preparedness is an important aspect to ensure that safety. As you may be aware, an outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has spread throughout China and to 31 other countries, including the United States.

I am writing to provide you with an update on recent developments, and to follow up on an earlier communication about the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) posted on our website on February 7, 2020. While there are approximately 60 cases in the United States and no confirmed cases in New Jersey, we would like to communicate some important information with our school community to assure you that we are aware of the issue and planning accordingly.

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are directing the public to reach out to school districts for information, we have not received any new guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education or the Department of Health.

The Hillsborough Township School District is following the advice of the New Jersey Department of Education, as well as state and local health departments. The New Jersey Department of Health is monitoring information received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and is working closely with our county health department to monitor the situation and is preparing guidance documents for healthcare professionals. Our school nurses have received up-to-date information from the National Association of School Nurses on how to lead health promotion and disease prevention efforts during this time. Not surprisingly, much of this information is very similar to other causes of respiratory illness, including the flu.

Some steps parents should take to help reduce the spread of illness include reinforcing the importance of frequent handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or coughing or sneezing into the elbow. Additionally, it is even more important to keep your child(ren) home from school if they are sick. If you or members of your family have recently visited those parts of the world identified as encountering higher rates of infection (China, South Korea, Japan, Italy, France, Iran, Hong Kong, etc.) and are experiencing symptoms of a respiratory illness, please reach out to the local health department as well as your school nurse, and seek immediate medical attention.

In Hillsborough, everyone, including building-based administrators, school nurses, and our maintenance and custodial staff are working together to ensure that our rigorous cleaning routine remains intact; this includes wiping desks and other surface areas with disinfectant on a regular basis and frequently changing garbage bags. Absences continue to be monitored and appropriate school-based precautions are in place.

The Department of Health does not recommend school closure for outbreaks of infectious disease. Moreover, the Department of Education will not allow us to close school as a preventative measure and conduct school online in order to comply with the 180-day school year requirement. As such, we will continue to comply with directives from the state and local health agencies and remain vigilant in our disinfecting practices to minimize the spread of infectious disease.

Currently, district administrators are working on plans for how we may support students and maintain instruction in the event of a district-wide, long-term closure. We will continue to provide excellent and appropriate educational opportunities for children and will remain focused in this endeavor. Should your child(ren) become upset or display increased anxiety or concern about these current events, please encourage him/her to seek the assistance of a trusted adult, including the school counselor.

Again, please take a look at our [previous communication](#) and peruse the resources available on COVID-19 at the [CDC website](#). Additional information will be communicated as it is received.

Please know that the safety of our students and staff remain at the forefront of any decision that is made.

Have a safe and enjoyable weekend,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent