



# PORT WASHINGTON Union Free School District

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March 12, 2020

Dear Port Washington Community:

The spread of the coronavirus has changed the world we are living in. This is an evolving situation that changes daily both locally, nationally and globally. We are truly navigating in uncharted waters. The first priority of the Port Washington School District Board of Education and District Administration is the health and safety of our students, staff, and as an extension, the entire Port Washington community. Today, the Board of Education, after due consideration of the most up-to-date information from our federal, state and local health departments and experts, and acting with an abundance of precaution, has decided to close our schools tomorrow, Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup> and Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. This will give us time to assess more closely what our options are moving forward and to have further discussions with educators and health experts around Long Island. Please know our teachers are working on plans for remote learning in the event of an extended school closure.

As a community, we must all work together to help manage this situation. During the time our schools are closed, we will continue with the comprehensive cleaning and sanitizing procedures recommended by both the CDC and the New York State Health Department for school facilities. There are also efforts residents can take to help mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. Our federal, state and local health experts have all been putting out directives and recommendations regarding best practices for what they are calling social distancing. What does this actually mean? In basic terms, it is making every possible effort to minimize your contact with other individuals. For example, if you can work from home, do it. If you must be in an office setting, try to maximize the distance between you and any of your co-workers. If you can avoid using public transportation (subways, buses, railroad), do it. Do not travel unless it is absolutely necessary.

What we would also recommend is that for the foreseeable future, you take advantage of every opportunity to remain at home. It is the place where you have most control and can limit interaction with others. With schools closed tomorrow and on Monday, we would suggest using these next four days to stay at home with your children. If you do not have the option of remaining home, we would still recommend that your children remain home, if at all possible – this is not the time to be having playdates or interacting with groups of other children.

For those families whose children are enrolled in the district's food programs, we have made arrangements to have these services available tomorrow and on Monday. We will have two locations for our students in need regarding breakfast and lunch – the high school lobby and the parking lot at Our Lady of Fatima. Food will be given out from a district school bus at OLF, no identification required. Hours for pick up are 7 a.m. – 10 a.m.,

and we will include both breakfast and lunch. There will be some soy-free, gluten-free meals available and so marked.

We appreciate that the current situation demands changes in how we go about our daily lives. It does call for what many might feel are drastic changes to our daily habits. However, we are in a situation where circumstances are changing rapidly, and we do believe it is best to err on the side of extra precaution.

We know that the Port Washington community has always come together in spirit and in action when faced with a challenge. We have every confidence that this will be the response we see now – that together and in support of each other, Port Washington will come through this stronger, better and more united as a community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Hynes", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael J. Hynes, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

MJH/da