

March 18, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

While schools have been closed, the administration and Board of Education have continued to work to develop additional plans for distance learning and to address the needs of our families and students. Guidelines from the Governor, the Department of Health Commissioner, and the Commissioner of Education change on a daily basis. We have implemented, and will continue to implement, recommendations for minimizing the likelihood of contracting Coronavirus (COVID-19) as we move forward and work to minimize risk to our students, staff, and the Berlin community. On the main district website, we have created a link to a page with updates related to the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on the school district.

The Monday, March 23rd meeting of the Board of Education will be closed to the public because of the current health situation. If you would like to view the meeting, please click [here](#). If you have a question for the Board of Education, please click [here](#).

### **School and Office Closures**

- Per Gov. Lamont's executive order, all Berlin Public Schools are closed, and will remain closed through Tuesday, March 31. While we are hopeful that we will be able to re-open schools on Wednesday, April 1st, the re-opening will be dependent on the health situation at that time, and the recommendations of our state and local health officials.
- The school closure also means that there will be no co-curricular activities, on or off school grounds during this time, including, but not limited to sports practices/tryouts, club meetings, etc.
- The CIAC announced today that if health conditions allow for it a modified Spring sports schedule will be created.
- School offices and the Board of Education office will reopen next week on Monday, March 23rd, pending the health situation and guidance from the State.
- As you may know, the Berlin-Peck Library is closed. If you do not currently have a library card, and wish to register for a temporary card, the link is: <http://lci.iii.com/selfreg~S3/selfregBP>. This will allow residents to receive a temporary card number immediately. The library will then email you with a permanent card number. The temporary card will only work with some online services, such as OverDrive, for access to audiobooks and ebooks.

### **Distance/At Home Learning:**

- At the elementary level, teachers are working to create additional materials and lessons to support student learning in the event of an extended school closure. Teachers will also

use online platforms, such as Seesaw (K-2) and Google Classroom or Schoology (3-5), to post lessons and communicate with students and families beginning Wednesday, March 25th.

- At the middle school and high school, teachers will begin posting lessons and assignments to support continued student learning on Wednesday, March 25th in Schoology or Google Classroom. The platform to be used has been communicated to students by their teachers. Teachers will be able to push out and collect student assignments through these platforms. Teachers may also use online platforms, such as Zoom, to hold virtual class meetings and provide opportunities for student interaction
- Pupil services staff are working to provide support to students with special needs and to support families at home during this time.
- We are aware that a number of Berlin families do not have access to the internet and/or do not have devices at home. Our technology staff has been working to communicate with families to make devices available to students and to help families gain access to the internet. Please see this [link](#) for a complete list of options. If you are in need of a device, please click on this [link](#) and complete the form.
- If you have completed the form to request a device, Chromebooks for students in grades 3-12 will be available for pick-up on Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at McGee Middle School. Parents/guardians should drive up to the front to receive the Chromebook assigned to their child. Please bring a valid form of identification.
- iPads for K-2 students will be available for pick-up at your child's elementary school from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Parents/guardians should drive up to the front to receive the iPad assigned to their child. Please bring a valid form of identification.

#### **Cleaning/Health and Safety Protocols:**

- School custodians have been working while school is closed to clean and disinfect all schools, Board of Education, and the Berlin Transition Academy.
- We are tightly limiting access to the buildings during the closure to minimize the possibility of re-introducing contaminants into the building.

#### **School Calendar:**

- April vacation will take place as scheduled.
- Many of you have seen the news that the Governor has waived the 180 day school year requirement. The days that Berlin Public School is now providing opportunities for learning at home will count as school days. We anticipate that school will close as currently scheduled for this school year, with the last student day on June 17th.
- Graduation is still scheduled for Sunday, June 21st at this time.

#### **Upcoming Parent/Teacher Conferences/Report Cards/Progress Reports:**

- No conferences, 504 meetings or PPTs will be held during the current period of school closure. It has not yet been determined if the conferences will be rescheduled when school is back in session.
- The closure will also impact the release of report cards and progress reports.

### **Family Health and Safety**

- *If a member of your family is diagnosed with a confirmed case of Coronavirus COVID-19, we encourage you to self-report to the school administrator so that we can take appropriate safety actions consistent with all public health advisories.*
- Families need to make their own decision about travel plans. If you are traveling to any high risk areas, we are requiring you to notify the school administrator so that we can be consistent with all public health advisories.

### **Breakfast and Lunch Distribution**

- To ensure that every child in Berlin has access to breakfast and lunch daily, we will provide food three days a week for pick-up at Willard Elementary School. The schedule will be every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7:00 am to 9:00 am
- Eligible families include anyone who attends Berlin Public Schools and other children in that household under the age of 18. Each child will receive two breakfasts and two lunches at the designated pick-up times until school resumes.

Thank you all for your cooperation and understanding during this challenging period. I will continue to provide updates as events unfold. The principals and I will continue to monitor email during the school closure to answer questions as we are able to do so.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Benigni  
Superintendent of Schools