March 15, 2020

Dear Stuyvesant Community,

These are very trying times for all of us. I want to provide some updates and guidance as we move into the week ahead. I have not heard back from the city with new guidance on school closures. In the absence of this information, we will own this work at the school level and move ahead accordingly. I have communicated to staff this morning the following information as we prepare for the week ahead.

Dr. Haber has sent out a survey to collect information on which digital platforms are in use at the school. We have an instructionally complex, large and diverse school. I’ve asked teachers to use the platform that is most familiar to them, their students, and best suited for their subject matter. Live instruction should not be the expectation. If it is provided, it is at the individual discretion of the teacher.

As we move to remote learning, students and parents should expect that their subject teacher will use one platform to deliver lessons, assignments, and resources, and have a system to collect work and provide grades for the work. They should have a system to communicate and answer questions from students. While I recommend weeklong assignments, the frequency is up to each teacher. Dr. Haber will compile one document to provide students and parents with a list of platforms individual teachers will use. We would like to transition to this format fully by the end of the week, or sooner if possible. If the city decides to keep schools open, our plan is to provide computers or laptops to students attending so they may work the same way that students are working from home. Students may also bring their own devices. This will help with allowing us to serve students with reduced staffing and to support efforts at social distancing.

For this week ahead, we have already placed a moratorium on all testing. We will now extend the same for any in-class quizzes, assessments, projects or performances that require school attendance. All assignments, projects due, should be allowed to be submitted to teachers electronically via a learning platform or email. For any projects that require collaboration, only that which can be done remotely will be assigned. No assignments or projects that require travel will be assigned. Dr. Haber has surveyed our student access to devices, and we will do our best to loan out laptops to students and staff if needed. I am advocating that the city provide wifi access for students in need. I will keep you posted on this matter.

We understand if students are not able to come in due to health and personal concerns and respect families’ decisions. Many of us are grappling with the same decision for our own children. Please do what you feel is best for you and your families. Students will not be penalized for being absent, and we will provide the ability to submit work assignments digitally starting by the end of this week. All in-class presentations this week are cancelled in all classes. Assistant Principals will work to modify
grading policies so in-class participation grades are not counted until further notice. Other modifications will be forthcoming based on our collective input and as the situation changes. This is an ever-evolving situation, and we will communicate all new information as it’s received from different agencies. We will stay in communication during the next few days and weeks.

Take care of yourself and your loved ones. We will move ahead as the strong community that I have come to love and admire.

With love and gratitude,

Eric

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