



THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

ANITA SKOP, *Community Superintendent*

COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 15
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March 16, 2020

Dear District 15 Community:

Today marks an historic moment in the history of education. Today, the fourth largest school system in the world, our New York City School System under the direction of Chancellor Richard Carranza and Mayor Bill DeBlasio moved to utilize a distance learning protocol and closed our school buildings until April 20th in response to very real concerns about the spread of the Corona Virus.

This is a move that was heartily supported by families in D15 as we received numerous emails and concerns from across the district requesting school closure and expressing concern for both students and staff in all of our schools. This has been an especially difficult time for our school leaders and teachers as they have worked tirelessly to continue to ensure that all of our students were experiencing challenging and engaging academic instruction while providing a safe and supportive environment for learning. They have done this in the face of increasing absenteeism and conflicting rumors, with the utmost professionalism, thereby avoiding an atmosphere of chaos and panic. It is an honor and a real privilege to call these incredible educators my colleagues.

As we go forward in the coming month, I have great faith in the school families in our district. District 15 is and always will be a caring and compassionate “village” where people truly want what is best for all of our children. It was one of the first things that I recognized in the district when I came here almost eleven years ago.

Over the next months we are going to be called upon to test that culture and our own resolve as we deal with this very real threat to the health of us all. To that end I wish to reiterate what has already been shared by the CDC and other medical experts. The intent of school building closure was that the children were not going to physically be together in a school setting thereby limiting the opportunities for groups to form and spread these long lasting germs. Consequently, this is not a time for recreational gatherings and extended play dates. As a parent of four daughters and lots of grandchildren, I know how hard it is to keep kids occupied at home. That being said this is not going to be an extended vacation. It is in fact the opportunity to move learning to an almost magical, virtual level. This what those science fiction stories predicted. Our children are going to explore the world from the comfort of their kitchen table! An educator on Facebook urged parents to encourage students to journal about these events because they are seeing history unfold and their first-hand accounts will be so meaningful fifty years from now. What a spectacular idea!

We, at the school and district level, want to support parents in accessing all of the virtual instruction that is going to be provided. To that end we are asking all parents to ensure that they have a MYSCHOOL account for their children. If you do not already have one please reach out to the Parent Coordinator at your child’s school this week and they will give you all the information. This can be accessed from any device including your phone and it is critical that

you set this up so that your child can be supported with online learning while the buildings are closed. Further the DOE will be working with students and parents to ensure they have the technology and tools they need to participate in online learning.

Please understand that this is a crisis that changes on a daily if not an hourly basis. We will be posting all changes on the District website and share them with principals, the CEC, elected officials and community leaders as well. Lastly, we are compiling a list of additional resources for families that can be used to enrich learning for even our tiniest students.

I want to thank everyone in advance for their support of this effort. I know that this is a very tumultuous time and that the road going forward is like a voyage into an unknown. It is stressful and probably difficult, but I know that we will face it with resolve and commitment as the District 15 community and ultimately we will come out of this having maintained our “*Heritage of Excellence for all Children.*”

With great appreciation for your support,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anita Skop". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Community Superintendent
District 15