

Letter from Superintendent, Dr. Lisa Brady
End of the Week Update
March 20, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

It has been a long week for all of us. And it seems like the days ahead will be even longer still. Everyone is adjusting to life away from school - students, teachers, staff, and families - and, as I said in my recent letter to our middle school students - this lacks all of the fun of a “snow day.” But despite it all, we are strong, we are determined, and we are “Dobbs Ferrians.” (yes, I just made that name up).

The variety of challenges and differences among our families in Dobbs Ferry is complex. Many young families move here because of our diverse community. Many of you are working from home and suddenly have your children at home with a wide variety of online learning requirements and experiences. I am sure that this creates an unbelievably stressful dynamic even though we are trying our best to connect with the children that we love in meaningful ways. We have other families that are food insecure - you can only imagine how that changes priorities. We are working with [SPRING Community Partners](#) in their ongoing work to help stabilize these families. You might want to consider donating to SPRING at this time since I know that we live in a generous community where many people go far out of their way to help when needed.

We are continuing to distribute breakfast and lunch “grab and go” bags on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. I am grateful for all those who are helping with this, especially our food services provider, Aramark. We have partnered with the Irvington School District to meet our responsibilities to provide child care to the children of health care workers and emergency responders, along with other essential job services as defined by the State of New York. We will be opening this childcare program at Springhurst in the days ahead.

There is so much of this that we are still working hard to figure out. The District is barraged with “back and forth” guidance from New York State, and we are collaborating with our colleagues in neighboring districts to partner and communicate what we learn “from minute to minute.”

We have incredible teachers, counselors, and support staff who are extremely committed to “being there” for your children despite the challenges that they may be facing within their own families. They share the challenges that you are experiencing

in working from home and having children at home because many of them are parents themselves.

Longer-term closures will require different strategies. I understand that some families are hoping for a virtual recreation of their child's everyday experience in school. Of course, we know that's not possible, and just seeing a child at home listening to their teacher as they watch their computer screen is kind of heartbreaking. We get that. We know that there are several software platforms and video solutions that are offering free services and resources. Our teachers continue to consider, adjust, and adapt to a new landscape none of us could have imagined a month ago. We have the skills, but we need time to do it well and do it right.

I want to thank you on behalf of all of us in the District for the many encouraging emails that you have sent to teachers, administrators, and to me. You have no idea how much they help in this time of such uncertainty for our schools. We are ever reminded that we have an awesome parent community, and we are committed to supporting our children and you - their parents and guardians - for as long as this takes in the days ahead.

Sincerely,

Lisa Brady, Ed.D.

Superintendent