

**Letter from Superintendent Dr. Lisa Brady**  
**Parent Update**  
**April 17, 2020**

Dear Parents and Community,

Week five is in the rearview mirror ..... but who's counting?

Along with the non-existent Spring Break and the Governor's announcement yesterday that the **New York Pause** order is extended through May 15th, a large chunk of 2020 is dissipating into thin air and leaves us in "school limbo." We are beginning to have preliminary discussions with staff and students about how schools will recognize and acknowledge students who are graduating and/or stepping up at the end of the school year, in the event that students do not return to school. This is a disheartening prospect, but at this point we need to plan for it.

In spite of the challenges at hand, there is a lot to celebrate from this past week when our teachers began delivering "live lessons" and meeting with students in virtual "face to face" classes. It is clear that our teachers and students miss each other terribly.

It is hard to emphasize the amount of planning and development necessary to take learning experiences that happen so naturally inside of our classrooms and attempt to recreate them virtually. Teachers spent almost every minute of what was supposed to be a Spring vacation and time for religious observances planning with their grade-level teams and content departments to ensure that students would have meaningful, high-quality instruction at home. Their dedication and commitment are what have always made the Dobbs Ferry schools so special. There is simply no amount of manipulating that can recreate the relationships that exist in our traditional classrooms and it is important to manage expectations for virtual "live teaching" and home learning.

In this time of uncertainty, we can be sure that the same trusted teachers who spend hours every day nurturing and teaching our children are the same educators taking a measured, reflective, intentional approach to online learning, so that ALL children can be included in a meaningful way. It is also important to know that many children "see" other familiar faces from their school each day. In addition to their regular teachers, they are still receiving academic intervention services, speech and language services, occupational therapy services and other supports. At Springurst, Principal Drake and Assistant Principal Cavallo have been "dropping in" to homes with lots of video time for children. In the Middle School and High School, a tremendous amount of time, coordination, and planning were required to develop "period by period" schedules for teachers and students. All of this was completed in

an extremely short turnaround time so that students would know exactly what to expect each day.

As we head into next week, our teachers, administrators, and staff will continue on a daily basis to be present and available to our children and families in Dobbs Ferry within the structure of this “new normal.”

One more thing to note is a change in communication strategy for the District. Although we piloted the Facebook Live feature of our District Facebook page this past week and originally thought to use it as a bi-weekly platform, we will stick with more traditional communication strategies for now and only use this tool for emergency announcements when necessary.

The future may still be uncertain, but I know that supporting each other and partnering to understand what is best for our children - at least for now - is what we owe our kids.

Please stay safe, have a relaxed weekend with your family and we will “see” your children on Monday for another eLearning week of school.

Sincerely,

*Lisa Brady* Ed. D  
Superintendent