



Orange Township Public Schools

Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D
Office of the Superintendent



March 13, 2020

Good Day Families and Staff,

The health, safety, and well being of our school community are the top priorities of the Board of Education, administration, faculty, and staff within the Orange Township Public School District. The district has policies in place to address the well-being of all students and staff. Policy 8451 addresses the Control of Communicable Disease. As a district, we have been monitoring the alerts from the New Jersey Department of Education, the New Jersey Department of Health, and the Center for Disease Control.

As of late, I have been in contact with our City and County health officials, Department of Education officials, fellow Superintendents, our board of education members and others in order to arrive at the most responsible and comprehensive decision and course of action for the students and families in our school district with respect to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. While there are currently no confirmed or suspected cases of (COVID-19) within our District, recent guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, local health department, the NJ Department of Health as well as Governor Murphy's announcement yesterday to cancel all events statewide with more than 250 people make it clear that the most prudent decision is for us to close our schools and transition to virtual learning.

We recognize that closure may be disruptive for families, and it is not something that we take lightly, but we have a collective responsibility to preemptively address this public health challenge. **We have made the decision to enact our Orange Township Public School District emergency closure plan effective, Tuesday, March 17 through March 27, 2020; whereby all District schools and offices will be closed.** The decision to transition to distance learning is a precautionary, proactive measure in an effort to minimize the potential risk of exposure to (COVID-19).

On Monday, March 16, 2020, we will have a half-day session for STUDENTS ONLY (12:30 PM). Students from the arrival until 12:30 PM will be instructed on how to access the academic work during the health related school closure. Once the students are dismissed, staff will continue uploading assignments for virtual learning.

For those who responded via the parent survey, sent out on Thursday, March 12th and Friday, March 13th (assessing at-home access to tablets/devices, desktop computers, Chromebooks, and laptops) and indicating need, we will have device sign out forms and procedures ready at your child's home school. Parents, you will have to sign them out and ensure you bring a valid Government ID. Technology coordinators are included in the distribution process and should see them when you arrive on Monday to pick up the device.

The distribution times for device at **all district schools** are as follows: 9:00 AM-11:00 AM and 1:15 PM to 3:15 PM. Scholars and Orange Early Childhood Center (OECC) have assignments that do not require technology integration therefore there is no need for sign out at those two locations.

Please know that we take this decision very seriously and we are being as thoughtful as possible to ensure equity and access in our preparation. It is our goal to provide support both academically and systemically as well as through the social emotional lens to all families within the Orange Township Public School District. We recognize that our school buildings serve as a secondary home for our students and staff.

All field trips, athletics, school-based activities/events, and ancillary programs are canceled effective March 16, 2020, until further notice. We will continue to update you regarding the reinstatement of activities. By, Friday, March 27, 2020, a decision will be made regarding re-opening schools on Monday, March 30, 2020 or continue with the closure plan. We will continue to evaluate this unique situation and provide updates to the community via email, phone blasts, the district website, and social media platforms.

During this time, the Orange Township Public School District will provide packaged ‘Grab-and-Go’ breakfast and lunch, effective Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at no cost to families, at multiple locations for pick up. The selected locations are

- Newcomers, located at 123 Cleveland Street
- OECC (includes students from Cleveland Street School), located 397 Park Avenue
- Scholars Academy, located at 268 Capuchin Way
- Forest Street School, located 651 Forest Street
- Heywood Avenue School, located at 421 Heywood Avenue
- Lincoln Avenue School, 216 Lincoln Avenue
- Oakwood Avenue School, located at 135 Oakwood Avenue
- Park Avenue School, located at 231 Park Avenue
- Rosa Parks Community School, located at 369 Main Street
- Orange Preparatory Academy, located at 400 Central Avenue
- Orange High School (includes students from STEM Academy), located at 400 Lincoln Avenue

Serving times for BOTH breakfast and lunch are organized by last name:

- A-F: 7:30am – 8:00am
- G-L: 8:00am – 8:30am
- M-R: 8:30am – 9:00am
- S-Z: 9:00am – 9:30am

It is important to note that if a student is from Orange Preparatory Academy and they have a sibling at Forest, it is allowable for them to pick up their breakfast and lunch from the closest school. Pre-Kindergarten students in provider sites will report to the school closest to their home in order to have a meal for breakfast and lunch.

I ask that you continue to check the website for the most up-to-date information regarding WIFI capabilities. We are committed to working with all of our families within the school district. As reminded, days in which students impacted by a public health-related closure have access to home instruction services, consistent with the guidance provided by the State, will count as a school day in compliance with the 180-day requirement and in accordance with N.J.S.A.18A:7F-9.

I want to thank you for your continued support of the Orange Township Public School District. Again, we are committed to the health and safety of all stakeholders that enter our doors. The most current information as it relates to the Coronavirus as well as preventative measures is posted on the district website, www.orange.k12.nj.us, on the COVID-19 Resource Page. We will continue to update the district website accordingly as more information becomes readily available.

Educationally yours,

Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D.

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Superintendent of Schools