

Berlin-Boylston Regional School District

March 20, 2020
Pandemic Crisis 2020
Parent and Student Update

Superintendent's Office Update

A video to brighten your day!

[The Kids Will Be Alright](#)

Here are some resources to help your family deal with this ongoing crisis.

- [Helping Children Deal with Stress](#)
- [Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope With the Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

The Board of Directors of [MIAA](#) voted to postpone the start of the spring sports season to April 27, 2020.

[Jeffrey Zanghi](#), Superintendent of Schools

Department of Finance and Operations

- As a reminder, “grab and go” lunches are being offered to any students eligible for free/reduced lunch, and also other students experiencing difficulties accessing food resources.

Please complete the form on the link below to sign up; more details are provided on the form:

<https://forms.gle/Ds9bY5FBLxSj1cUx9>

- Fee based programs: Some parents have inquired about whether they need to continue to pay for fee based programs such as the after-school program, or athletics. Please feel free to hold off on submitting payments given the current uncertainty, and we will provide updates on this as we learn more.

-[Bob Conry](#), Director of Finance and Operations

Facilities Department

- All three buildings should be 100% disinfected at the end of the day Wednesday.

-[Steve Pusateri](#), Director of Facilities

Technology Department Update

Internet access across the nation, and really the globe, is being utilized at unprecedented levels. Please help your student understand the need for patience as they try to do things like watch videos on-line or in some cases even connect to the Internet for basic applications like email. We can all help each other by limiting our use of streaming services during the daytime hours when we hope our students are completing a majority of their work. If you find your students are having difficulty with their Internet access, please have them reach out to their principals so that we are aware and can try to provide support/guidance for both your students and for their teachers.

-[Paul Mara](#), Director of Technology Services

Pupil Personnel Updates

Team meetings:

We have begun holding virtual Team meetings, when possible and with parent agreement, this week. The final IEP is then shared electronically and parents may print out the signature and placement page, sign them and return to my office. If you are not able to print, we will send paper copies for your signature once we return to school. The district is unable to sign at this point, but will sign and send parents a copy once we return.

Contacts

Some parents have let us know that staff have been great about being in touch, but unfortunately, we are sometimes overwhelming parents. While you may contact any of us directly, we have asked your child's Liaison to be the primary contact for parents so we don't place additional burdens on parents.

Counseling

If your child is in crisis, and you have concerns that they are a threat to themselves or others, you should call 911. If your child is seeing a school clinician, their services will continue as planned once school is in session again. During times of school closure, the counselors have been reaching out to families in order to offer them resources and advice. Clinicians will also be available each day for some limited office hours.

You may also contact Community Health Link (Emergency Mental Health Services) at 1(800) 977-5555. The following is a link to Youth Mobile Crisis from Community Healthlink. This community-based support provides individuals 21 and under with 24-hour access to assessment and evaluation of pressing mental health concerns. Those that feel emotionally unsafe and exhibit concerning behaviors, and suicidal and homicidal ideation are urged to reach out to this team. Youth Mobile Crisis will provide the individual in need and their family with resources and tools to help maintain safety.

<http://www.communityhealthlink.org/chl/youth-and-family-services/youth-mobile-crisis-intervention-ymci>

Additionally, here's a resource from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) regarding how to talk about COVID-19 with your children:

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

The situation is changing quickly, and we will do our best to keep you updated and provide support. Stay home and be safe during this time.

-[Karen Molnar](#), Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Tahanto Update

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In trying to put into words my encouragement and support for you and your families I have taken the following from *On Talking to Children About Social Distancing: Harnessing the Intrepid* by Dr. Evelyn Biliias Lolis:

We've had school cancellations for weather and other unforeseen incidents but we've never had cancellations for social distancing purposes. The concept of social distancing

has taken some time for us adults to wrap our minds around and for some has posed additional dilemmas in this balancing act we call parenting. But the recommendation is clear and the research is sparkling: we need to sacrifice our social routines in order to do our part for our neighbor, our community, and the larger globe.

There is no doubt that these precautions will inevitably cause dissonance/confusion in children. After all, we are creatures of habit and some of us even cling to routines as the centering force of their existence. And here we are called to disrupt routines and suspend familiar ways of living and doing. But don't be fooled—children are resilient and adaptable. They will complain and nag and then they will move on to the next idea, activity, or thing. And with the right help, they can come out discovering a new version of themselves for which they are satisfied and proud.

Disruption is a vehicle for stillness—it forces us to pause and recalibrate what we “think” we know vs. what we “know” to be of essence to us. It distills for us (and rather quickly) what is most fundamental. The rest is frosting and sprinkles—it's merely how we “dress” the fundamentals. But take away the dressing and the fundamentals are still there.

There is still so much that we can convey, uncover, and grow as a family and a community during this time. I have a feeling our children will surprise us and that we can surprise ourselves.

So, don't be afraid to suspend routines in order to create new ones. Don't be afraid to talk to your children about their role in this society; that we are engaging in this effort so that we can keep everyone safe around us and so that those who have been called to serve during this time (our researchers/scientists, healthcare workers, and educators, clergy) can step up and do what they need to do while we do what is within our own calling.

There is no one script for conveying this information or reframing nonproductive thoughts. However, feel free to use the following language as a basis to redirect thoughts that may be commonly expressed at this time (just be sure to scale down or scale up depending on the age of your child):

- 1. This is temporary. We need to do our part for now because we love and care for our society and we need to let those who can help take care of this do so with as much ease as possible.*
- 2. This is an opportunity to grow and discover. Although there are certain things we need to accomplish during the day (i.e., your academics) you will also have more time to do things that you may have not had the time to do before. Think of something that has been in your heart and let's do it together.*

3. *This may feel boring but it is also a “challenge”. What activities/projects can you do or think of that can help you (or your friends) help others during this time? Let’s all be part of the solution and support one another: kids supporting kids, adults supporting kids, kids supporting adults, and any constellation thereof.*

4. *I value our time together. Even though we are going to be doing things a little bit differently, we are still doing them together—and that is what is most important to me.*

5. *I love you and am so grateful for you.*

6. *I am proud of you.*

I have no doubt that our children will surprise us. They are tremendous in their capacity to adapt, re-evaluate, and create. We just tend to muffle this ability by scheduling them up the wazoo and restricting their ability to discover their multidimensionality by themselves. This is an opportunity to give them a break. And sit back and observe. I have a feeling we will be in awe of what we discover.

-Dr. Evelyn Bilias Lolis

From [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) A Parent Resource](#), it is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If parents seem overly worried, children’s anxiety may rise. Parents should reassure children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy. However, children also need factual, age-appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk and concrete instruction about how to avoid infections and spread of disease. Teaching children positive preventive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can help reduce anxiety.

Please be assured that I will continue to be available to both you and your child. If you need anything, or would just like to say hi or if your child would like to say hi to me, please feel free to reach out.

I know that these are times of uncertainty, but one thing that you can be certain of is I AM HERE FOR YOU! Feel free to reach out to me at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

We are STAG STRONG!

[-Diane Tucceri](#), Principal

Elementary Schools Update

We hope you all have been finding balance with work and home life. A few resources have come across my virtual desk that I wanted to share with you.

Is your child having trouble understanding what is going on and the change in routine? Here is a [social story](#) to help.

We hope you saw the [email](#) regarding food but a few additional resources we have found:

- Main Street pastries in Northboro: Offering free breakfast items to children who normally get free or reduced lunch. Just talk with a staff member and they will give a breakfast item discreetly.
- Hobbit Hole Farm: Root veggies to people in need for free
- Sir Loin Catering in Northboro: Tuesday and Thursday starting at 9 am. Meals free of charge to those in need until they are gone

As we move forward in this virtual/distance learning experience, we decided it would be helpful to get overall feedback from you thus far. Please take a few seconds to answer this [short survey](#) ensuring that we are supporting the community as best we can.

-[John Campbell](#), Principal, Berlin Memorial School

-[Ace Thompson](#), Principal, Boylston Elementary School