



March 13, 2020

Dear Palisades Community,

In close coordination with the superintendents of all Bucks County public school districts, the Executive Director of the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, the Director of the Bucks County Health Department, the Director of Bucks County Emergency Management Services, and the Bucks County Commissioners, Palisades School District will be closing effective 6PM Friday, March 13, 2020 through Sunday, March 29, 2020. This period of closure could be extended further, based on any number of rapidly changing variables.

It is possible that executive orders from either the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the United States federal government will further expand upon or define this period of closure. At this time, this decision has not yet been officially mandated by either state or federal government authorities. This decision has, however, been fully discussed locally with all public school leaders and the appropriate county government officials.

This closure no doubt raises many more questions than answers. The district will work in full cooperation with local, state, and federal authorities to compile information and resources that speak to the closure and its impact on the community.

This decision was not made quickly or without significant reflection and discussion. In fact, the county's school leaders have spent countless hours working in-district and across the county to evaluate the ever changing nature of the coronavirus pandemic. We worked to establish best practices following CDC guidelines, in partnership with the Bucks County Health Department and Emergency Management Services leaders, to limit social interactions in an effort to proactively protect against community transmission. We are thankful for the support we have received from our county organizations. All superintendents in the county agreed that keeping schools in Bucks County open would become increasingly difficult given the impact on staffing and other factors which would impact the safety of our staff and students.

Therefore, Palisades will cease providing all services to all children/students **effective 6PM this evening**. This includes all special education and related services. All meetings, activities, athletics, and related school events are postponed and subject to reschedule or cancelation. No community use of the school facilities will be permitted

during this time. No transportation will be provided. No before or after school childcare will be offered. Everything, in short, is cancelled or postponed.

School personnel and students are prohibited from entering school facilities; however, a limited number of essential staff may be able to perform essential functions such as running payroll, cleaning facilities, maintaining communication systems, and providing security as needed. This is to be determined.

Enrichment materials for students are being sent home today with our elementary students, as well as being sent via email to our middle school and high school student email accounts. The materials will also be made available for students to access on our website.

Here are a few other items that we would like to share, with likely additional information coming to you later today:

- Any medications that your child is prescribed and is being held by the school nurse, must be picked up from your school by parents/guardians no later than 6PM today.
- Bag lunches will be provided to students using a “drive through” process at Tincum Elementary School. This is the only school location approved by the USDA and Department of Education to do so. All district students will be served from this location. More information will follow.
- In addition, we may be able to provide chromebooks to our elementary students who otherwise do not have access to a device should this situation continue for a longer period of time. Again, more information will follow.

It is uncertain at this time, absent clear direction from the Commonwealth, about the status of these days and whether they will need to be made up in the future. As we learn more, I will continue to update you.

Please trust that I am doing my best to keep everyone informed as new and additional information is received. If you have any questions, please contact your child’s building principal and the information or questions will be funneled to me.

Thank you, and stay safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget O'Connell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr. Bridget O’Connell, Superintendent