March 25, 2020

Dear BSD Families,

First and foremost, thank you for your patience and understanding during the past eight days as even the most routine aspects of our daily lives have been dramatically altered due to the COVID-19 outbreak. With Governor Carney’s announcement of extending the school closure until May 15, 2020, the Brandywine School District will be moving to online instruction for students beginning Tuesday, March 31, 2020.

Since the closure, I have heard from many parents regarding how much their children miss their teachers and long to return to school – a great reminder of just how important the student-to-teacher and student-to-student relationships are in the academic, social, and emotional development of our children. Our teachers are equally excited to re-connect with their students and understand that this will be a new adventure for themselves professionally, as well as for their students and families.

As we move to online learning, we realize that nothing can ever replace a talented teacher in a classroom. The transition from face-to-face learning to online learning will be a heavy lift on multiple fronts. The majority of our secondary students are familiar with the District’s learning management system, Schoology; however, many of our youngest students have little to no experience with Schoology or other platforms that may be utilized. The switch to online learning and virtual interaction will challenge all of us, regardless of age, to model what it means to be a life-long learner, adapting to the ever-changing world around us.

We also realize that full online learning may not meet the individual learning needs of all students and that adjustments, accommodations, and modifications will be necessary. For some students, the mode of delivery will be different; for others, content and skills may be different – similar to the type of adjustments made during the regular school year but provided through available technology. The District is finalizing a plan in which families without any computers in their homes may sign a loan agreement for one device per family. The District does not have enough devices to provide every student their own device. Furthermore, we will only be able to provide one per family if those with devices at home allow those without to take advantage of the loaned device.

In the coming days, the District will provide additional information to students and parents regarding expectations for learning. The online learning will provide meaningful instruction but is not intended to replicate the exact experience of a traditional school day. A parents’ guide with tips for parents on how to support their students with online learning will be published on our District website in the next few days.

Please be assured that we know there are still many questions that parents have at this time. We will continue to work on behalf of our students and our families to find answers to the burning questions that all of us have as a result of these uncertain times. We will continue to update information as it becomes available.

We realize the enormity of the challenges confronting us. They will require all of us to work together and take individual and collective responsibility to minimize the impact on our children. Parents, family, and teachers are a child’s greatest role models. Children watch our every move, act and react like we do, and imitate our attitudes and perspectives. Now’s our opportunity to teach them the greatest lesson of all – how to maintain love, life, and happiness in the face of challenge and adversity. Students will remember this period for the rest of their lives. We have an opportunity to influence those memories in a positive way.

Again, thank you for your understanding, patience, and support as we face this challenge together.

Respectfully,

Lincoln Hohler
Interim Superintendent