

March 15, 2020

Dear GCSD Community,

Superintendents in the Questar III BOCES region of Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene counties decided to cancel all classes effective Wednesday, March 18 until Wednesday, April 1 out of an abundance of caution.

Although Columbia County does not have any confirmed cases at this time, we are seeking to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to ease public anxiety about schools being in session during this public health crisis.

The decision was made after an emergency meeting of superintendents in Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene counties with the local health departments and Questar III BOCES. Our school district will continue to monitor guidance from local, state and federal agencies to reassess and reevaluate whether we may need to extend our closing if conditions worsen.

We understand that this is an inconvenience for our families, but our primary concern is the health and safety of our students and staff. Ultimately, we wanted to be thoughtful about planning and not make a sudden decision that does not allow our families and staff to prepare for what could be a more extended closing.

This week's schedule provides our teaching staff with time to prepare instructional materials and resources for students in the event of a longer-term closing. It also allows our students to clean out their lockers and bring home their belongings, including digital devices, instruments and other items.

Monday, March 16, 2020 Superintendent's Conference Day for staff, no school for students

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 Students and staff attend school to gather belongings, materials and other items that may be needed for a potential prolonged closing

3/18/20 – 4/1/20 Classes Canceled

Our school district is committed to providing educational resources for our students during this time, but we also realize that you cannot replicate the school day for your child. Teachers will contact you directly with self or parent-guided materials, either online or through paper packets. We will also seek to maintain our student, teacher and family relationships as much as possible through social distancing and digital means. We encourage you to maintain a schedule and routine to provide as much normalcy as possible for your child.

We are looking into the possibility of providing meals to students who participate in the Free and Reduced Lunch program. Pick-up or delivery logistics will be shared directly with participating families.

Thank you for your continued patience and support as we work together through this unprecedented situation. Looking ahead, we anticipate that there will be many questions. We will continue to follow guidance from our health and education departments and will provide additional information as soon as possible. Please continue to follow the CDC's recommendations – including thorough handwashing, social distancing and avoiding large groups and those who are ill – to stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Susan LS Brown

Superintendent of Schools