



GERMANTOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

123 Main Street, Germantown, New York 12526-5338

April 7, 2020

Dear Elementary families,

The last few weeks have led us all into uncharted waters and it feels very unsettling. On behalf of the Germantown teachers and staff, please know that ensuring the well-being of each family has been our prime focus and will continue to be for however long remote learning occurs.

- Making sure our students remain engaged with their classmates and teachers is incredibly important for their overall well-being. Our staff has worked hard to personally communicate with every child and their family.
- Our counseling team has been working diligently to seek solutions for internet access in many homes.
- Our Grab and Go and Backpack Food Program have been able to support so many of our school families. (Please call 537-6281, x 2301 if you would like more information.)
- Hopefully, your family was able to wave hello to our Caravan of Cheer last week. Our staff had so much fun seeing all the smiles and friendly signs. Thank you!
- And our Clipper Challenges are created so that students may express learning in a variety of ways that reinforce the power of community. See our GCSD Facebook page for Challenge #3, the Egg Hunt Challenge 😊

We will continue to seek ways to strengthen the connection and ensure the family's well-being so that our students always know that they are cared for and valued by their community.

As of this writing, the cancellation of classes extends until the 29th of April. However, once our staff learned of the extension to April 14th, we began to shift the guidance of student learning from providing content review to creating online instruction focused upon new learning. To support this endeavor, we are fortunate Germantown School District has been able to provide personal learning devices for all our children, Kindergarten through twelfth grade. Please know remote learning is a shift, not only for our students, but for our faculty as well. We are learning to communicate in new ways, and I ask for your patience as we work through this. I am so proud of our staff for their incredible commitment to making this work in a way that respects the needs of each family and the importance of continuing a child's growth. Please be considerate of their office hours when reaching out with questions. They will respond to all questions as soon as possible.

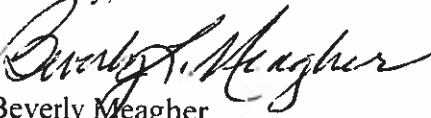
For our third trimester, I have asked teachers to provide narrative comments based upon skill progress in lieu of numerical grades. We hope this reflects our recognition of the stress many of our families are experiencing and yet provides feedback to parents regarding each child's progress.

On the district website, our counseling team has posted a broad range of resources families may access related to circumstances resulting from the COVID situation. Additionally, we will be posting supplemental learning opportunities for each grade level by subject area as we recognize many of our students wish to extend their learning beyond what is assigned by their teacher. I strongly recommend establishing a learning schedule for your students that accommodates the needs of your family best. The New York State Education Department recommends 120 minutes per day be committed to direct learning at the elementary level, making shifts in time for the youngest or oldest of our students. If possible, provide a quieter learning space in your home so that students may best focus and participate remotely.

Finally, our district calendar had scheduled Spring Break beginning this Friday and extending through next week. I would like to reiterate Superintendent Susan Brown's notice that our teachers will provide continual instruction throughout this time period and the district will provide the Grab and Go Food Program as normally scheduled. We believe this continuation of support and services is essential to maintaining the connection and well-being of all our students.

It takes a village to raise our children and, especially in moments like this, we recognize the power and reality of these words. Our children watch us to understand how to react and think about things. How we respond in uncertain times either provides reassurance or uncertainty to children. Please let us help you. Reach out to me, our counseling team, or your child's teachers with any concerns or questions. We are here first and foremost to support you and your family. Above all, please be well and enjoy the beauty of Springtime in the Hudson Valley.

Sincerely,



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Elementary Principal
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