

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope this message finds you and yours safe and healthy. To our essential workers in all industries, I extend the deepest of gratitude to you as you shoulder the heavy lifting that will carry us through this tragic, and indeed historic, time. Our experiences as a community and society will shape the future that we bequeath to our children. Throughout, all members of the Floral Park-Bellerose School District community have worked tirelessly to support our children, their families, and the community at large. In early March, our teachers prepared a “two-week toolkit” in the event of a school closure due to the Covid 19 virus. That toolkit, Phase I, went into effect March 16th. Because of the forethought that our principals and teachers had, our proactive approach paved the way for the second phase of distance learning, Phase II.

Phase II of our remote learning plan began on Monday, March 30th. At this time, classroom teachers with the help of their building administrators, have made contact with all students, established office hours, discussed communication modes, through various apps, websites and platforms, and asked parents to keep portfolios of student work. More iPads were distributed to families and are continuing to be distributed. Principals and assistant principals continue to work closely with our staff to identify where we need to provide additional professional development to our teachers. Assistant principals are also working closely with specialty areas, special education, extracurricular clubs and English Language Learners. In addition, CSE meetings began on March 30th via teleconferencing so that we are able to provide our special education students with Individualized Education Plans with the recommended services and supports that they need.

Phase II will continue until April 24th and I'm proud to say that professional development is going extremely well and some of our teachers will be rolling out new modes of technology very shortly. We will continue to provide professional development as needed, continue outreach to the families of our special education and ELL students, and continue to improve our new online craft. Many extracurricular clubs have already reached out to their students and have begun some fun activities remotely.

Given that none of this was expected and our teachers, parents, and students have risen to the occasion is just an example of how resilient, strong and determined our Floral Park-Bellerose School District community is. Throughout all of this, we have partnered with SCOPE Educational Services to provide childcare for children of parents of essential workers. This information is on our website. We are continuing to provide lunch to any student up to age 18, and most recently we were approved to provide breakfast as well so this new information will be added to our website along with some pictures of the food we are providing.

I want to especially thank Karen Crenshaw, our food service director and the ladies from our cafeteria staff who so willingly and bravely volunteer to help out each day. I would also like to especially thank Dan Cunneely, our technology director for his unending work ethic and loyalty to our District along with his staff Mike Kruger and Manpreet Kaur. Behind the scenes and distributing iPads, they are a primary key to the success of our technology initiative.

At this point I could go on and on thanking the many individuals who have kept our School District moving in this new direction, but that would be thanking each and every person in the entire District, including parents and students.

They say that “Adversity is like a strong wind. It tears away from us all but the things that cannot be torn, so that we see ourselves as we really are.” One thing is for sure, the Floral Park-Bellerose School District cannot and WILL NOT be torn, we are educators and we will figure it out. We are all teachers. Our students, parents, and all staff are teachers and WE’VE GOT THIS”!

Sincerely,

Dr. Kathleen Sottile

