

ISLIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING • 215 MAIN STREET • ISLIP, NEW YORK 11751 • (631) 650-8240 • FAX (631) 650-8218

CHRISTOPHER SMALLEY, Ed.D.
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF
CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

April 1, 2020

Distance Learning

Dear Islip Families,

For the past several weeks we have put plans in place for connected educational experiences that have looked much different than teaching and learning as we know it. Throughout this new process we have been listening to feedback from our families and staff that have helped us review our efforts so far. As we move more into this distance learning platform, we are all reminded that there is nothing that can take the place of teaching and learning experiences that are face to face. With that in mind we also know that some of the technology tools we are using are allowing us to do things in ways we could have never done so years ago. While these new teaching and learning experiences may be limited, there are some very rich and wonderful things we can gain from these current interactions. We hope to capitalize on the strengths associated with this distance learning experience while balancing everything else we are unable to do at this time.

One message that must resonate across our community is the fact that we understand that for many of you, these remote teaching and learning experiences are not the most important things in your life right now. In fact, a good deal of energy is going to be spent on significant life issues, and we can't stress strongly enough that we understand. Students or families going through any type of hardship or struggle are encouraged to let their teachers or administrators know. The last thing we want is for these remote learning experiences to add more stress and mental exhaustion to your lives. Our staff is working around the clock to redefine our practices and create a structure that is new to all of us.

Lastly, we know that much of what we are doing is grounded in technology. We are continuing to explore every option we have to provide devices to students who do not have any. Many of the typical avenues for these resources have also been compromised by the current crisis.

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COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE

The Islip School District hereby advises students, parents, employees and the general public that it offers employment and educational opportunities, without regard to sex, race, color, national origin or handicap. Inquiries regarding this non-discrimination policy may be directed to: Title IX Coordinator and/or Section 504 Coordinator. Location: Central Administration Building, 215 Main Street, Islip, New York 11751.

Report Cards and Grading Window

- **Elementary School**

- The elementary report cards for the second trimester became available on the parent portal on March 27th. No grading was used during this distance learning experience to count towards the March 27th report card.
- Moving forward, all assignments and projects for Kindergarten through 5th Grade will be assessed using a pass/fail system. This grading system will be in effect through this distance learning experience only and can change once schools reopen.

- **Middle and High School**

- The middle and high school 3rd quarter marking period ends on April 15th.
- Teachers will provide a quarterly grade for students considering any exams, projects, presentations, or other work completed prior to our school closure on Friday, March 13, 2020.
- Any work that has been completed during this distance learning experience will be counted towards the grade ONLY IF the grade benefits the student's average.

There has been limited guidance from New York State regarding 4th quarter grading. We plan on providing more information on this when it is available.

Student/Family/Teacher Communications

Over the past several weeks, teachers have created a system where they have reached out to students and parents daily. While in some cases that has worked well, there have been other cases when that contact has been too much (mostly in cases where students have multiple teachers each day.) Every grade level and class type across a district can be so different that a one size fits all daily interaction approach is not reasonable from kindergarten through 12th grade.

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While we will continue to advocate that all teachers establish contact with students daily in most cases, there are some instances when this may be different. When teachers are providing work and assignments that take place over several days, the structure of communication can vary. In reviewing this practice, it makes sense for all teachers in the district to provide daily office hours. Office hours will allow parents and students to have a block of time where a teacher may be able to answer questions and provide instant feedback. This doesn't mean that teachers aren't available at other times, but office hours would mean that a clear time is available for an instant communication. All teachers will provide a one-hour window in the morning and one-hour window in the afternoon each day for office hours.

The district has many ways of getting out information, and the primary source for official documents will always be through the district website. There are times when communication will be available on building or department specific social media sites as well. While social media is an important tool for the district to share information it's not always the best way to communicate back with us. Please feel free to reach out directly to your child's teacher with any question or concern. If the teacher is unable to answer the question, they will guide you to someone who can.

Islip Pride

The Islip School District will continue to support the community in any way we can. While we are focusing on the current state of affairs, we are also looking at the months ahead and how all of this will impact our future. Aside from the teaching and learning experiences, school is made up of hundreds of other life changing events and activities that have often defined us. We want everyone to know that important events coming up are also a part of our daily conversations. We hope to be able to provide clarity on end of the year happenings as soon as we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Smalley", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christopher Smalley, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction