

Shrewsbury Borough School

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope that this email finds you and your family healthy, safe, and surviving the COVID-19 pandemic through eight weeks of school closure and home instruction. This week I'm including my remarks from the Shrewsbury Board of Education from this past Tuesday, April 28th, for your information:

“Good evening Parents, Guardians, and Community Members, I thank you for joining us this evening for our monthly Board Meeting, now conducted virtually via Zoom. First and foremost, I want to thank every member of our school and local community for their support, patience, and inspiration over the past several weeks. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced all of us to come to terms with living our lives in a very different way and we have all had to dig deep to find the strength to deal with new challenges and obstacles to ensure that our most vulnerable family members, friends, neighbors, and others are safe.

On March 12th, I made the decision to close our school to students, faculty members, and staff not knowing what the future held for any of us. With very little time to prepare, our faculty initiated what has been a massive shift in educational delivery for each of our students. We truly take for granted what happens each day in our classrooms, and our teachers have found new ways to connect with students, to engage them from a distance, and to provide support and structure for all of our families at SBS.

We understand that students learning at home with their parents indefinitely is not at all like the high quality experience that we enjoyed before the pandemic. We understand that this places undue pressure on parents to help their children and for students to learn in new and different ways without the benefit of their teachers directly assisting them. But we will keep making changes in how we deliver instruction and curriculum and we will continue to get better at virtual, remote instruction each and every day. Every teacher that I've spoken with since we have been closed has told me that this is hard and they've never worked harder as educators than they have now. I am incredibly proud of each and every one of our teachers and I want you to know how much they value and care about your children. Like many of you, they are also striking a balance between family, work, and pandemic while confined to their homes. I know that when I see teachers using their washing machines as magnetic boards to teach a lesson that there isn't anything more they wouldn't do to help our students at home. While everything right now is more difficult for us all, our teachers are still making an important difference in the lives of our students.

We are also making important changes along the way and we will continue to change how our virtual, home instruction model works based on the important feedback from students, parents, and teachers. Starting next week, parents can expect that every teacher will check in with their students, provide opportunities for additional support and help when needed, conduct online classes when appropriate, and provide important opportunities to interact with students and to allow our students to interact with each other. The communication between teacher and students is critical to supporting their online learning experience and providing the support that every student needs to be successful. I welcome and appreciate the communication that I have with parents about how their experience is going at home. I believe that our teachers can and will find the right balance of tools, technique, and communication to help all of our students be successful during this extraordinary time.

As of this evening, I still await specific information from the Governor, the NJDOH, the NJDOE, and other state and local governments on when SBS will be able to reopen. While I don't know what type of change that we can

expect in order to reopen school, it is obvious that we will have to reconceptualize many aspects of our school and our school day. I fully expect that there will be things that we have done for years that will have to change.

To all of our students and parents, but most specifically to our Class of 2020 and their parents, I want you to know that we will do whatever we can to protect and preserve our important traditions here at SBS. We will find ways to make sure that our graduates are honored as we have honored previous classes with the understanding that Graduation and end of year activities will likely be canceled. I can't tell you what it will be or what it will look like, but the Class of 2020 will be our first class to embody these changes and to lead the way for other changes that will surely follow. Keep your chins up, Class of 2020 Tigers! We will get through this together!

As I shared with our parents and guardians previously, the district has purchased important, hospital-grade cleaning equipment that will augment our daily cleaning routines. Using UV light obelisks and electrostatic foggers, we will be able to provide the level of confidence necessary to have our students and teachers return to SBS once we are able.

I want to thank the students who have submitted their Pledge and Peace Builder Pledge videos! I have six currently and I will start to publish them daily once I have a few more. A huge thanks and shout out to Jordyn in Kindergarten for her video! She was the first one to submit her video! Great job, Jordyn!

Finally this evening, I want to thank Mayor Erik Anderson and our Shrewsbury OEM Coordinator Jerzy Chojnacki for their incredible support and assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their partnership along with other local education and local government leaders has been

I want to thank our Mayor, Erik Anderson, and our Shrewsbury OEM Coordinator, Jerzy Chojnacki as well as my colleagues and other local officials for being such important partners during this extraordinary time.”

Thank you to all our students, and Ms. Bremekamp, who have already submitted videos! Great work!

We will begin publishing them on Monday but I want to encourage everyone to submit videos of the Pledge of Allegiance and the SBS Peace Builder Pledge for daily publication.

Please use this link, [Pledge of Allegiance & SBS Peace Builder Pledge](#), to sign up and to upload your video. These student videos will be published to Twitter, Facebook, and our new SBS YouTube Channel. I will also send these videos to our teachers to post in their Google Classrooms each day. You can find a copy of the SBS Peace Builder Pledge on our website or by following this link: [SBS Peace Builder Pledge](#).

As always, please visit the SBS website for important health information about the COVID-19 pandemic from the CDC, NJDOH, and the Monmouth County Health Commission #1. You can also contact Mrs. Halen, our School Nurse, who has been seeking out resources for students, parents, and staff. I have also included several important resources that will also be posted on our website.

Stay healthy and stay well, Tigers! We got this!!

Very sincerely,

Brent A. MacConnell
Superintendent