

**William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.**

Superintendent

March 23, 2020

Dear School District of Philadelphia families,

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) announced [today](#) that all Pennsylvania schools, including the School District of Philadelphia will remain closed through at least [April 6, 2020](#) as a result of the COVID-19 response efforts.

As the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) in the Philadelphia area intensifies, our School District is keenly focused on identifying new and equitable ways we can support the needs of our students, families and staff while schools remain closed. The guidance we are receiving from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and U.S. Department of Education is ever evolving and our responses will evolve as more information and guidance become available. This letter provides an update on our plans so far to reach all students.

We are developing a remote learning experience for all students, along with a plan to provide student devices to ensure equity. We are also in the process of organizing virtual training and resources so that more teachers can stay connected with students using Google Classroom. We will share more details and dates in the near future.


We are further strengthening how we serve our students and families during this time by:

- expanding our hotline efforts as of today to include nine additional hotlines in multiple languages so more families can get answers to a range of general questions in their native language. Hotlines operate Monday through Thursday mornings from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
  - 215-400-5300 - English
  - 215-400-8489 - Spanish
  - 215-400-8480 - Albanian
  - 215-400-8481 - Arabic
  - 215-400-8482 - Chinese
  - 215-400-8483 - French
  - 215-400-8484 - Khmer
  - 215-400-8474 - Portuguese
  - 215-400-8485 - Russian
  - 215-400-8486 - Vietnamese
- immediately making available a new [covid19info@philasd.org](mailto:covid19info@philasd.org) email address where families can submit their questions for reply;
- launching on Tuesday, March 24, a new webpage at [www.philasd.org](http://www.philasd.org) with answers to Frequently Asked Questions;

- sharing a new set of K-12 Learning Guides (LGs) available for students online beginning Wednesday, March 25, and in paper form at all 49 School District grab-and-go meal sites starting Thursday, March 26;  
*(District meal sites now operate only on Mondays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon. Three breakfasts and three lunches can be picked up for each student in your family each day.)*
- further clarifying the supports our teachers can provide to students including: communicating by email, phone, or other platforms to answer questions and support learning; enabling access to District-purchased online learning programs; scheduling virtual office hours or times for individuals or groups of students to “meet” with their teachers; and suggesting other resources for students to use to support learning;
- sharing with teachers and families more self-guided resources and online tools to keep students engaged and excited about learning everyday.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and support as we navigate these unprecedented times together. Please take care and stay safe!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William R. Hite Jr." followed by a stylized flourish.

William R. Hite Jr., Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
The School District of Philadelphia