

Western Suffolk BOCES
Office of the Chief Operating Officer

March 26, 2020

Dear Staff,

I am writing to update you concerning the unprecedented and historic outbreak of the Coronavirus and the operational status of Western Suffolk BOCES. While most of us fear the global impact of this pandemic, we are understandably more concerned about our families and region. Amid the concern, every day I hear about compassionate and heroic acts of ordinary individuals who serve their communities. Our brave frontline medical workers and first responders deserve our gratitude and admiration. The most recent prediction in our region is for the virus to continue to spread and peak over the next 2-3 weeks. We await further direction from Governor Andrew Cuomo regarding whether the current school closing period will be extended and we expect an announcement shortly.

I would like to update you on the status of the operation of our organization. Many routine tasks have been scaled down as we support basic business functions to ensure bills are paid, necessary items are ordered, and payroll is issued in a timely fashion. We continue to operate our personnel and purchasing offices. Our CTE and Special Education offices have been very busy planning to expand the distance learning supports for our students. Our Child Nutrition Office and food service workers have been on the frontline serving grab-and-go meals to needy students. The Maintenance and Operations staff have been working diligently to keep our strategic buildings open and operational. I want to thank all of our staff working on-site or from home for keeping our agency operational. We are continuing with Board meetings, which will be conducted virtually.

Last week, I assisted with the mailing of the student learning packets prepared by our teachers. I can't begin to express how thankful and proud I was of our staff who worked so diligently to develop these home resources to ensure the continuity of instruction for our students. These packets included multiple resources for parents to use at home with their children. It is this type of effort and dedication which will sustain our agency through this crisis. Within the next day or so, instructional staff will be receiving further directions from administration to enhance these home supports and resources for our students during this extended period of school closure. It is vital that staff continue your commitment to provide the very best services to our students which is the hallmark of this agency. This new initiative will require the full support of staff as we all collaborate to ensure the success of our efforts.

Hopefully, in the not too distant future, the virus outbreak will subside and we can begin planning for the reopening of school. Please note we will continue to support our students, their families and our staff. Thank you for making me feel so privileged and honored to work with such a dedicated and wonderful staff. Stay safe, hopeful, and trust that a return to normalcy is in our near future.

Michael Flynn
Chief Operating Officer