

March 31, 2020

Dear Camden Employees and Parents,

I hope everyone is getting through this difficult period by continuing to work together and support each other. Camden Central Schools are continuing to support our community by connecting health care workers and first responders with childcare, partnering with our local Food for Thought Organization to provide food for families in need, and providing continuous instruction for our students. It is nice to see members of the communities that make up the Camden Central School District working together to help and support each other.

Contact information for childcare and families in need of food:

- Healthcare Workers and First Responders please call the Oneida Herkimer Madison Child Care Resource Center at 315-223-7850 ext. 222 if you need support for childcare either now or in the future
- Families in need of food contact Kathy Lynch, Food for Thought at 315-245-4957

In addition to food and daycare, the district understands there is a good chance we could be closed for a longer period of time than we are currently scheduled for. When we initially closed, administrators, faculty and staff members came together to gather and deliver work to our students at home. Hundreds of school employees volunteered their time across the district to get schoolwork to our students at home.

Over the next few weeks, we are gearing up to launch Camden's Long Term Continuous Instruction Plan. We are gathering several hundred computer devices across all four buildings and these are being distributed to both teachers and students in need of a computer to work from home. More information will follow soon detailing how parents can pick up computer devices the week of April 13. This past Monday, Mrs. Wieland, Director of Technology sent a call out using Parent Square asking parents to call the District Office if their student needs a computer device to complete their school work during the school closure. If your student needs a device but you didn't call, please email Camden Schools immediately.

- Email us at devices@camdencsd.org to request a computer device for your student. Be sure to include your student's name, grade level, address and phone number.

In addition, some students and teachers do not have home access to WiFi. Therefore, we are working over the next few weeks to purchase equipment that will connect to WiFi, in each of our school buildings and broadcast it into the parking lot of each building, creating a school building hotspot for students to access. Our district has also reached out to local groups to ask if they would be willing to share their WiFi with the community. We are gathering a list of these areas and will share that with families soon to help bring WiFi to our surrounding communities.

While the district is gearing up to provide computers and WiFi, teachers are also planning and preparing lessons, over the next few weeks, that will be delivered to students virtually. Technology allows teachers, school counselors and social workers to stay in touch and offer support to them without being physically present. It is important to minimize exposure to others during the pandemic.

During the next few weeks, teachers are learning new platforms to communicate with students such as Parent Square, Google Classroom and Google Meet. They will also participate in professional development activities to support their own learning as they transition to a virtual environment where students are learning from home. I am so thankful to our teachers and staff members who have maintained a positive connection with their students throughout this time. It has been great to see teachers reading stories to students every night, celebrating their accomplishments on iReady and singing songs with them using a virtual platform. The Camden Schools Administration, Faculty and Staff truly care about our students and families.

Moving forward, it is important to know that Governor Cuomo has ordered all schools to cancel all snow/emergency and vacation days during the school closure if we want to receive any aid from the state. State aid makes up more than 80% of our school budget so we will adhere to these expectations. All staff members in the district have been on call and will remain on call until we need them to come in. Until then, please stay home and stay healthy.

Parents and employees, thank you for all that you continue to do to support our students during this difficult time. We have great kids and they need our care and support, especially during times like these.

Camden Strong!

Dr. Ravo Root
Superintendent of Camden Schools