



**VERNON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
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**Karen D'Avino**  
Superintendent of Schools  
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May 8, 2020

Dear Vernon Viking Parents/Guardians,

As the school closings imposed by the Governor's office due to COVID-19 extend through the end of the 2019-2020 school year, the Vernon Township School District is planning for many obstacles that we are facing due to the removal of students and teachers from classrooms. In the coming weeks you will hear details about the following:

1. End-of-Year School Close-Out

Due to ongoing school closures, our district custodians will begin the process of cleaning out student lockers and placing student belongings aside for parent pick-up. Due to the magnitude of carefully cleaning out lockers, student desk areas and properly identifying belongings in a district with three thousand students, parent pick-up of student belongings will not begin until June 1, 2020. We will continue to maintain social distancing guidelines and adhere to healthy practices during pick-up of student belongings. Information regarding school close-out will be introduced in Dr. McKay's podcast this evening and details will be in the Principal's correspondence next week. Drop off of school items to schools will begin to occur after June 1, 2020 as well. Chromebooks will be kept over the summer. Please stay tuned to the district and school information regarding close-out details. This is a large undertaking by our district custodial staff. We thank you for your patience as we navigate through the challenges ahead.

2. Summer ESY Programs

At this time the guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education is to provide a remote Extended School Year program. For our special needs population, the summer program is integral in preventing academic regression. The Vernon Township School district is currently planning on remote learning, as recommended. Ms. Merrill, Director of Special Services, and her faculty are working on addressing the diverse needs of our students. As we near the close of the school year, more information will be provided by the Department of Special Services.

3. Graduation/Advancement Ceremonies

The Vernon Township School District continues to plan for a live, non-traditional Graduation at Vernon Township High School, however the continued guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education is to hold virtual ceremonies. This information is constantly in a state of flux. Guidance changes daily.

It is my hope that a live ceremony for our very deserving High School seniors will come to fruition. Correspondence has been sent to High School seniors by Dr. Anderson, Principal. Should you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to her.

Glen Meadow Middle School is preparing a virtual Advancement ceremony. This is being coordinated by Mrs. Gebhardt and other Glen Meadow faculty. Although I know our eighth grade parents may feel disappointed, we look forward to their Graduation from Vernon Township High School in 2024. Rest assured that plans continue for other meaningful rites of passage and events for our eighth grade students prior to the beginning of the school year in September.

#### 4. School Reopening in September

The Vernon Township School District has established several reopening committees. There are a variety of stakeholders who are assisting in this process. Led by Dr. McKay, Assistant Superintendent, the district level committee has parent representatives, teachers, administrators, nurses, food services, technology, custodial, and board member representation. It is essential we develop a comprehensive plan for any recommended reopening guidance we receive from the Governor's Office for the 2020-2021 school year. We are currently planning for three scenarios. They include: 1. Planning a return to a classroom as normal in September, 2. Planning for a combination of remote learning and classroom learning, or 3. Planning for remote learning only. The plans are extremely difficult to predict because the recommendations from the New Jersey Department of Education, New Jersey Department of Health and the Governor's Office change often based on the most recent information on COVID-19.

I want to assure all of our families that the Vernon Township School District teachers, administrators, nurses, custodians, secretaries, and all other employees continue to not only provide outstanding remote instruction and care for our students through the 19-20 school year but are working diligently for whatever lies ahead. We remain dedicated to providing communication to our families based on recent information we receive from state agencies using multiple methods of communication. Whether it is a letter from me, a podcast from Dr. McKay, or communiques from your principals, the Vernon Township School District will continue to communicate with you during these very challenging times. Please continue to reciprocate by calling or emailing us with questions or concerns regarding items mentioned in this correspondence or any other district or building issues. We also remain concerned about the needs of our community and will continue to support families however possible. It is my sincere hope that schools reopen in September (even with modified practices) so that our children can learn in the environments where they can once again experience academic and social-emotional growth.

Sincerely,

*Karen D'Avino*

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Superintendent of Schools