



## Hamburg Central School District

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

Administration Building

5305 Abbott Rd.

Hamburg, NY 14075-1699

Telephone: (716) 646-3200 x 7220 FAX: (716) 646-3209

---

April 16, 2020

Dear Hamburg Central School District Families,

I hope this letter finds you well. The purpose of this letter is to provide information regarding the changing nature of the learning that each child will experience over the next couple of weeks.

When we began this period of school closure on March 16, we anticipated a return to in-person school for our children on, or about, April 20th. At that time, we made the decision to require each teacher to offer learning to students that engaged their intellect and curiosity according to the commitments of our Strategic Plan. Thinking that requires students to create, care, solve and discover, and that emphasizes student choice and voice, directly impacts their success in any curriculum we teach in our school district.

Now that it is clear that our estimate of a return by April 20<sup>th</sup> was too optimistic, the circumstances require that we restart the teaching of the written curriculum for each class. This will occur for each student between Wednesday, April 22 and Monday, April 27. The exact date will be communicated by each teacher.

The purpose of new instruction is to offer learning experiences to each student that will most likely support their success in the next level of that class for 2020-2021. Given the fact that teaching and learning remotely is very new to everyone, each teacher will build units of learning around 4 - 6 “Power Concepts” that will become the focus of learning for the rest of the academic year, whether, or not we return to regular session.

At the time that the teacher resumes the written curriculum, work will be assigned and assessed by the teacher. It will be assessed using a framework of “Satisfactory” and “Incomplete”, with an emphasis on productive teacher feedback to students regarding the student’s level of effort in completing the task, the quality of thinking demonstrated by the work product, and the student’s ability to apply the learning. This mindset is supported by best practice and is the most fair and equitable way to assess under these very difficult circumstances.

For middle school and high school students, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter will close as of March 12<sup>th</sup>. Students will have the opportunity to make up missed work with the opportunity to earn full credit (graded according to the framework in place at the time the assignment was given), or have missed work excused by the teacher, until May 1. Report cards for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter available on the Portal on May 12<sup>th</sup>.

We are also reintroducing synchronous learning through Google Meets. Teachers will not, in any way, be required to use this method. Like all instructional choices, we will defer to their professional judgment about if and when to use Google Meets to help them accomplish their learning goals. I apologize for the delay in shifting back to synchronous learning, but it was important for us to assure that we were using the safest and best application. Google Meets has great capabilities, and is the safest application for our learning community.

My advice to you when it comes to supporting remote learning is the same today as it was a few weeks ago. Do what's practical for you to do according to your circumstances, without allowing it to become something that unnecessarily adds stress to an already stressful time. Our teachers are fantastic. Communicate directly with your child's teachers regarding how your child is experiencing the learning that is being offered. We are all working really hard to establish a routine and balance for remote learning under very challenging circumstances. Your feedback to our teachers will be helpful to them.

As we enter this next phase of school closure, please know that we remain committed to making sure that the learning continues even though schools are closed. We also remain focused on the human impact of this crisis, and are committed to the health and wellbeing of your entire family. For that reason, I have included the [link](#) to our meal distribution form, as well as a link to [mental health resources](#).

I am still optimistic about a return to in-person learning in our schools before the end of the year. Ultimately, however, the decision to return to school is the Governor's to make. If he decides to open schools before the end of June, we'll be ready and very excited to welcome your children back safely. If not, we'll continue with remote learning through the end of June. In any event, we deeply regret the loss of any time with your children, and we can't wait to be back together with them as soon as it's safe to do so.

I will continue to communicate with you as the circumstances require. Stay safe and be well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Cornell". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Michael R. Cornell  
Superintendent of Schools