
Hillery Park Elementary School



Home of the Huskies

Monthly Messenger

April, 2021

Springing Forward

The final three months of any school year can aptly be described in a range of terms from stressful to exhilarating. This roller coaster of a school year with all of its twists and turns will have a far calmer, more peaceful and healthy ending.

I am excited to inform you that our Buffalo Public Schools are preparing to offer students in grade 5-8 the opportunity to return for in-person instruction learning to school on May 10th. Prior to spring break, I sent a survey to parents via email. If you did not receive this survey, I ask that you send me an email and I will resend the survey to you. My email address is vvanderlip@buffaloschools.org

This survey will help provide a solid estimate of how many students will return and on which days. The phase-in plan continues to allow students who return to attend either on Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday. There will be more details regarding dates and other logistics forthcoming.

I can tell you that our entire faculty and staff want nothing more than to see your children in school. We will continue to follow all health guidance, policies and procedure to ensure the safety of our students, your children and family members. Hillery Park Elementary has proven to be a safe place to learn.

State Testing

They say April showers bring May flowers, so I guess not all dark clouds are bad. This is how I would characterize NYS testing this spring, as a dark cloud over our otherwise sunny spring.

Yes, schools in NYS will still be required to administer tests in English Language Arts and math to students in grades 3-8 this year. However, this will be a much different approach than years prior. Allow me to simplify the pages of regulations into a straightforward list on how this impacts our students:

1. Only students in grades 3-8 who attend school in-person will be tested.
2. BPS students will only be required to take Part 1 of the two part test.
3. The BPS Board of Education reassures Buffalo parents and caregivers the right to choose to have their children opt-out of grades 3-8 State assessments free of any penalty or repercussion.

Normally at this time of year I would be writing you, sharing my excitement about our students opportunity to shine on these assessments. However, these past 13 months have been anything but normal. Therefore, I am telling you we as a school will do as we are directed by the NYS Ed. and

administer half of the test to the students who are here to meet our obligation. However, I am also telling you parent to parent that I would be writing a letter to my children's school stating "***This year my child will not be taking the NYS exams. Next year when they are actually in school full time, then they will take your test.***" Feel free to copy those words and sign your name of you feel the same. As always, any questions, please email me at vvanderlip@buffaloschool.org

Allergy Season

I was reminded last week when my own nose began running like a faucet that many of our students suffer from diagnosed season allergies. In the midst of a pandemic these allergy related symptoms can send up a red flag and require us to send a child home. Obviously we do not want to do this, but also have to protect the well-being of our entire building.

One thing parents and families can do is provide us with a medical diagnosis stating that your student has seasonal allergies. Additionally if your child is prescribed medication, even if over the counter, to take during the day, please bring those medications to our health clinic.

Also if you are not a member of our *Kaleida Clinic* but would like to know the benefits of joining, please email me. There is no cost and a wealth of benefits to signing up with the clinic.

Ideas for Screen-Free Learning

I am a father of four. My wife (who is a Kindergarten teacher) have a sophomore in college, twins who are juniors in High School and a freshman is a High School. We have watched our children need for the screen and dependence on the screen approach an unhealthy level this last year. Over vacation I told them to leave the laptops, iPads and smartphones at home. I lost the phone fight, but the point was to have them read actual books and magazines. Write with a pen on paper. Old school, right!

With two educators for parents my children are used to my wife and I harping on them about learning. You would think this old school approach while on vacation would have pushed them over the edge. However, the opposite occurred. They actually seemed to enjoy just reading a book, writing silly poems and drawing. Here is a cool link to 10 more ideas to keep students learning without the use of the screen anytime you want them to take a screen break. <https://ditchthattextbook.com/no-internet-remote-learning/>

Commented [VV1]:

