



Friday, March 13, 2020

To the VDS Community,

At 11:45 a.m. today, the Bucks County Commissioners ordered a Declaration of Disaster Emergency and the activation of the county's Emergency Management Center for support and to respond and coordinate efforts with local municipalities and other partners. In close coordination with the superintendents of all Bucks County public school districts, the Director of Bucks County Emergency Management Services, and the Bucks County Commissioners, **The Valley Day School will be closing effective Saturday, March 14, 2020 through Sunday, March 29, 2020. This period of closure could be extended further, based on any number of rapidly changing variables.**

It is possible that executive orders from either the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the United States federal government will further expand upon or define this period of closure. At this time, this decision has not yet been officially mandated by either state or federal government authorities. This decision has, however, been fully discussed locally with all public school leaders and the appropriate county government officials.

This closure no doubt raises many more questions than answers. VDS will work in full cooperation with local, state, and federal authorities to compile information and resources that speak to the closure and its impact on the community.

This decision was not made quickly or without significant reflection and discussion. We worked to establish best practices following CDC guidelines, in partnership with the Bucks County Health Department and Emergency Management Services leaders, to limit social interactions in an effort to proactively protect against community transmission. We were hopeful that these measures would enable our District to remain open using social distancing, modifications to schedules, visitors, and other activities. With the Commonwealth of PA executive order yesterday that essentially shutdown neighboring Montgomery County, the impact on local school district daily operations has been substantial. A number of our staff live in Montgomery County, resulting in obvious difficulties for them to come to work.

Therefore, VDS will cease providing services to all children/students effective Saturday, March 14, 2020. This includes all special education and related services. All meetings, activities, athletics, and related school events are postponed and subject to reschedule or cancellation.

School personnel and students are prohibited from entering school facilities; however, a limited number of essential staff may be able to perform essential functions throughout this period of shutdown. Specific details will be provided to the staff.

Early next week, information will be provided on the VDS website and through our electronic messaging system for students and staff who may need to pick up items left in schools. All VDS employees and educational service partners will be contacted via email with additional information.

It is uncertain at this time, absent clear direction from the Commonwealth, about the status of these days and whether they will need to be made up in the future. As we learn more, I will continue to update you. We appreciate your confidence that VDS is doing our best to keep everyone informed as new and additional information is received.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald M. Hall".

Ronald Hall, Ed.D
Executive Director