



April 1, 2020

Dear Families and Staff,

I hope this message finds you and your family well. As the Coronavirus begins to make more a footprint in our community, it is important to recognize that many of our team members and community members are becoming impacted by this pandemic. Throughout the past few weeks, and into the foreseeable future, new information (both good and bad) will continue to pour into our world.

The most difficult news to convey to the community, especially our students and faculty, is the Governor's declaration that all school districts closed under his order must forfeit any remaining snow days and vacation days in order to receive the state aid that we qualify for. Up until this order, the understanding was that students and staff would have a break from the virtual learning environment during our scheduled spring break, which is why I decided last week to partner with many of the districts in our region in announcing that we would move forward with our break. Unfortunately, we are required to change course on this decision and students will be expected to continue the learning process as we have during the past three weeks, between April 6 - 16, 2020.

While I respect the need for parents, students, and staff to have some respite from the new world we are experiencing; sadly, this new order requires the district to continue offering a continuity of learning in whatever method we have been until this point. In consulting with the Rome Teachers' Association Executive Team regarding this order, it is clear that our teachers are ready to answer the call to support our children and families however they can. As this order is in direct violation of teachers' contracts throughout New York, the flexibility and devotion of the members of the Rome Teachers' Association is second to none and I applaud their dedication and unwavering determination to support learning for our children.

I realize that canceling spring break is likely not welcomed news. Teachers realize the challenges students have been facing and the effort they have been putting into adapting to this new form of learning. The focus from teachers will continue to be on helping students catch up on review material they may have fallen behind on and providing information on utilizing some of the technology platforms that will be introduced in the coming weeks and/or months.

Over the next few weeks, we will continue to monitor this developing situation and continue to consult with regional colleagues and state health and education officials. We will update you with developments as they become available. Please be assured that we are doing everything in our power to continue to provide academic opportunities and minimize disruption to our students, families and staff during this unprecedented situation. As always, thank you for your patience, understanding and flexibility.

Yours in Education,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter C. Blake", written over a light grey background.

Peter C. Blake