

March 13, 2020

Dear NSSEO Parents/Guardians:

In collaboration with our member districts, this message provides the latest information outlining NSSEO's plan for safeguarding the health and safety of our students, staff and community members amid the growing challenges we face with the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Our area superintendents' team deliberated throughout the week, consulted with medical experts, reviewed state and national information, including the Governor's most recent address last evening.

Reflecting our shared responsibility for our students and staff, NSSEO has made the decision to:

- Cancel school for ALL NSSEO programs for the week of March 16th - March 20th
- NSSEO Staff will participate in a school improvement work day to plan and prepare for Distance Learning on Monday, March 16th.
- NSSEO Distance Learning will begin on Tuesday, March 17th.
- Spring Break will continue as scheduled during the week of March 23rd - March 27th
- Our tentative plan is to return to school on Monday, March 30th. As the time gets closer, we will send out updated information.

We care deeply about our students, families and staff and an incredible team worked diligently this week to develop a customized plan for our NSSEO students during this extended period of school closure.

#### **What this means for NSSEO:**

We know that the decision to close school for a week creates a series of issues for families. We remain intensely focused on addressing the needs of our students and have worked hard to develop a customized approach to use during the school closure. Although several districts across Illinois began using e-learning last winter, we had not considered it until this pandemic required us to approach this option to provide learning opportunities during the extended period of time our schools and surrounding districts are closed. This specialized version of distance learning addresses the range of needs of our students across our programs during this period of time.

#### **NSSEO Distance Learning begins Tuesday, March 17th:**

There are many ways that local school districts can implement e-learning. We have worked closely with other districts, special education cooperatives and Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to design a distance learning plan aligned to the needs of our students. NSSEO aims to offer distance learning that will provide legitimate learning experiences and opportunities that will continue learning opportunities for each individual child. Some of the learning experiences may happen within an e-learning structure, while other learning experiences will not. Students served by NSSEO will have distance learning plans that align with their IEP goals as determined by the child's IEP team. Parents can follow this link to read more about [NSSEO's Distance Learning Plan](#). This plan has already been approved by our regional office of education and meets the requirements under e-learning.

As a first step, parents should ensure that they can access their SeeSaw (Timber Ridge, Miner School, DHH EC through 5th grade) or Remind (Kirk, DHH Middle School-High School) accounts. Please access the following links if you need instructions for setting up [SeeSaw](#) and [Remind](#). This will be the primary way for your child's team to communicate with you during Distance Learning.

**Other Cancellations:**

- In-person Parent/Teacher Conferences at NSSEO programs are cancelled on Monday, March 16th. Teachers will have opportunities to discuss student progress with parents during Distance Learning Days.
- IEP meetings during the week of 3/16-3/20 may be held remotely or rescheduled on a case by case basis.
- All before/after school events, student job placements offsite, and field trips are cancelled until further notice.
- PERC workshops will be cancelled until further notice.

**Other Information and Resources for Parents:**

NSSEO Breakfast/Lunch Program - Families whose children qualify for the National School Breakfast/Lunch program will have the opportunity to continue to access this program on Distance Learning days during the school closure.

- Breakfast/Lunch will be available for pick up on a daily basis at Kirk School located at 520 South Plum Grove Road in Palatine from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.
- When a family picks up lunch for their child, they can also pick up breakfast for the next day.
- The Breakfast/Lunch program will be in effect Monday, March 16th through Friday, March 20th.
- The Breakfast/Lunch program will not be available during NSSEO scheduled spring break Monday, March 23rd through Friday, March 27th.

Distance Learning Website - A website with all up-to-date information on Distance Learning is in the process of being created. Once the website is complete, we will send families a link with many helpful resources to support Distance Learning at home.

Access to Internet - Comcast is making it even easier for families who live in a Comcast service area to sign up by offering new customers 60 days of complimentary Internet. Go to [www.internetessentials.com](http://www.internetessentials.com) to sign up for your 60 free days.

Medication - If your child has medication in the nurse's office and needs it at home during this time, please make arrangements with the program nurse to pick up your child's medication by end of day Monday, March 16th.

During this very challenging time, this decision was not an easy one but one driven by our utmost concern and responsibility for the education and safety of our NSSEO students. Please feel free to reach out to the building administrators or one of us at NSSEO offices if you have further questions. Thank you for your important roles as parents and partners in navigating this pandemic together.

Sincerely,



Judy Hackett, Ed.D.