

Hi this is Dr. Bennardo with two important messages:

The first message is relative to the impending snowstorm that is announced for this Thursday. The New York State Department of Education recognizes the unique circumstances of 2020 and has offered districts the option to make this year's snow days remote learning experiences. And this is what we are going to do in South Huntington, as a pilot test. This pilot program, which may or may not be a long-term practice, could provide a tremendous amount of flexibility in future calendar development.

So: Thursday's school schedule will include a modified remote school day with a schedule from 10 AM to 2 PM for all schools in the district. This reduced schedule will provide our students and parents time in the morning to shovel and clear snow, as well as time after 2 PM for sledding and other typical snow day activities.

Silas, Stimson and Whitman Schools will operate from 10 AM to 2 PM with periods of 28 minutes and 2 minutes between classes. We recognize the unique nature of this situation and have provided teachers and students with great flexibility to work in real time or by assignments, Google meetings, discussions, etc., depending on the age and circumstances of each case. While attendance will be taken, we will allow teachers the flexibility to determine the time required and the rigor of assignments.

Similarly, at the primary level, the remote class schedule will also be from 10 AM to 2 PM. And we will take a 30 minute lunch break from 12 to 12:30 with a "special" class (such as art or music) around the final hours of the school day. Again, assignments will be manageable in recognition of the snow day format, and teaching will take place through independent assignments, individual activities, Google meetings, etc. We will not expect under any circumstances that a child or teacher will be tied to your screen for hours on end.

Again, the virtual school day will be four hours on Thursday. The process is a bit different at the primary and secondary level. However, teachers will use combinations of independent learning and virtual meetings in a way that accommodates the structure and dynamics of each class.

The bottom line is that, like everything else this year, the dynamic is very new to us. We are testing this virtual snow day model with the expectation that our staff and students will rise to the occasion, as they have in the past, and forge a pleasant path for our family of learning.