

# Berlin Central School District

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Dear Families,

After a meeting of all school districts in the Questar III BOCES region (Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene Counties), **Berlin Central School District is cancelling all classes beginning Tuesday, March 17 out of an abundance of caution.** We will be in session on Monday 3/16 with a half-day for students, and a full day for staff only on Tuesday 3/17. All districts in the BOCES will remain closed through March 27.

Although Rensselaer County does not have any confirmed cases at this time, we are seeking to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to ease public anxiety about schools being in session during this public health crisis.

The decision was made after an emergency meeting of superintendents in Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene counties with the local health departments and Questar III BOCES. Our school district will continue to monitor guidance from local, state and federal agencies to reassess and reevaluate whether we may need to extend our closing if conditions worsen.

We understand that this is an inconvenience for our families, but our primary concern is the health and safety of our students and staff. Ultimately, we wanted to be thoughtful about planning and not make a sudden decision that does not allow our families and staff to prepare for what could be a more extended closing.

Last week, our teaching staff prepared instructional material and resources for students in the event of a longer-term closing. Holding classes on Monday will allow students time to retrieve the prepared material, as well as clean out their lockers and bring home their belongings, including instruments and other items.

**Monday, March 16, 2020: Half-day for students to gather belongings, materials and other items that may be needed at home.**

**Tuesday, March 17, 2020: Full day for staff only.**

**Wednesday, March 18, 2020: Classes cancelled through March 27, 2020.**

Our school district is committed to providing educational resources for our students during this time, but we also realize that you cannot replicate the school day for your child. We will seek to maintain our student, teacher and family relationships as much as possible through social distancing and digital

means. We encourage you to maintain a schedule and routine to provide as much normalcy as possible for your child.

We are currently developing our plan to provide meals to students. Information on accessing meals will be provided next week.

Thank you for your continued patience and support as we work together through this unprecedented situation. Looking ahead, we anticipate that there will be many questions. We will continue to follow guidance from our health and education departments and will provide additional information as soon as possible. Please continue to follow the CDC's recommendations – including thorough handwashing, social distancing and avoiding large groups and those who are ill – to stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen Young, PhD". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Dr. Stephen Young  
Superintendent of Schools