



NORTHPORT-EAST NORTHPORT UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Robert L. Banzer
Superintendent of Schools

January 18, 2020

Dear Northport Middle School Community:

I am writing today to inform you that in consultation with the Board of Education, I have decided to relocate students from Northport Middle School, effective Thursday, January 23, 2020. This relocation will remain in place through the balance of the current school year.

In order to prepare for the transition, **there will be no school for Northport Middle School students on Tuesday, January 21 and Wednesday, January 22.** The relocation plan will be finalized and communicated to families before Thursday, January 23.

As you are aware, PWGC is continuing its comprehensive investigation of environmental conditions at the school. This includes extensive testing of soil, vapor, indoor air quality, a geophysical survey and testing of our school's sanitary system and storm water. Last evening, PWGC informed the district that soil samples from two different septic systems on the southern and eastern sides of Northport Middle School contained elevated levels of benzene that will require further remediation per the Suffolk County Department of Health Services.

It is important to note that preliminary air testing indicated no observable detection of VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) – which includes benzene – inside the building, or from the soil samples, as well as at the source of the septic tanks. However, in the best interest of our students and staff and in consideration of ongoing testing and remediation, the building will be closed for the balance of the school year.

PWGC will continue their investigation into the environmental conditions at NMS, and of course, we will share with our community any update that is shared with us.

At a Special Board Meeting Workshop this past Wednesday, I outlined a number of options detailing contingency plans if it was necessary to move our students and staff. Prior to that meeting I consulted with the PTSA Presidents' Council, NMS faculty, and union leadership, including the teachers. The resulting relocation plan is as follows:

- **Northport Middle School 8th Graders** will be relocated to the High School. Most of the courses will take place in one wing of the building. However, when it is necessary for students to attend classes such as science, art & technology in another part of the building they will be escorted by staff.

- **Northport Middle School 7th Graders** will be relocated to East Northport Middle School.
- **Northport Middle School 6th Graders** will be relocated to two elementary schools with their academic teams. Six Gold & Six White will attend Norwood Avenue Elementary and Six Blue will attend Bellerose Avenue Elementary School.

Although a great deal of the plan is in place, we will need Tuesday and Wednesday of next week to refine the logistics for staff and students, including scheduling, transportation and food service. We will keep you updated as we work through this process.

We realize that this is a substantial undertaking. However, the Board of Education and I firmly believe it is in the best interest of our students and staff to relocate. It is our goal to minimize the disruption to our students and staff to the extent possible. We will have staff available to all students to help them through this challenging situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Banzer", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Banzer
Superintendent