



March 4, 2020

Dear families,

I am writing to you regarding the school district decision to cancel the field trips we had scheduled for spring break. These cancellations included two trips to Japan, a trip to Italy, a trip to Europe, as well as a trip to New York.

We know that a great deal of planning goes into these trips, and that our students and staff truly look forward to them. We also anticipated that the decision to cancel the trips would be upsetting news for many of our families. I can assure you that senior staff took all this into consideration when making this difficult decision.

The school district recognizes that there are always some risks associated with school trips and with international travel in particular. The Board of Education also recognizes the inevitability of such risks and provides staff with guidance through *Procedure 8901.2* on how to mitigate them. One of the requirements for mitigating potential risks is to prepare a detailed safety plan that considers student safety should the region become destabilized. Unfortunately, because of the many unknowns associated with this global health emergency, senior staff was unable to complete a full risk assessment or prepare a detailed safety plan for the scheduled trips.

The list of countries and regions affected by COVID-19 continues to grow every day, which means that any international trip can potentially be affected. Some of the scenarios the school district had to consider included the possible infection and/or quarantine of students/staff while out of country, as well as the provision of adequate supervision for all other students on the trip in such a scenario.

While individual families can assume higher levels of risk, as a school district we cannot expose our students and staff to high levels of uncertainty that cannot be reasonably mitigated with a safety plan. Although we deeply regret the disappointment these cancellations may cause, we want to stress that the safety of students and staff is always the primary consideration in any decision the school district makes about school trips.

School district procedure on all level 2 field trips requires travel insurance that includes a full cancellation refund. Your school will be following up with you regarding the reimbursement process in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Russell
Superintendent of Schools