



WESTBRIDGE
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Viviana G. Litovsky, Ph.D., M.A.
Director

March 13, 2020

VIA Electronic Mail

From: Anthony Hadzimichalis
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2020 11:48 AM
To: 'Zarra, Joseph' <Joseph.Zarra@doe.nj.gov>
Subject: WBA - Unique Concerns

Dear Mr. Zarra,

Thinking about you and your staff during this time. Hoping all is well with you and your team.

The reason that I am writing is to express our collective concerns as a school staff related to COVID 19 and the potential for transmission in our therapeutic school facility.

Our therapeutic school employs 47 staff members (9 licensed clinicians, 10 certified teacher, 10 certified teacher aides, 8 certified specialist teachers, 2 custodians, 8 office/administrative staff) that work in close proximity with our students, often in psychological and physical interventions in designated small spaces in response to disruptive, destructive, dangerous and sometimes potentially lethal behaviors related to mental health issues.

Also, our trained staff are traveling to us from multiple cities/towns/counties in which school closings impact child care and are affecting their ability to come to work.

We serve 70 of New Jersey's most behaviorally challenging students (K-12) with severe emotional and behavioral special needs coming to us from 28 different NJ school districts - some in which schools have been closed (Andover, Belleville, Bergenfield, Bloomfield, City of Orange Township, Clifton, East Newark, East Orange, Elizabeth, Elmwood Park, Glen Ridge, Newark, Hackensack, Harrison, Irvington, Jersey City, Kearny, Linden, North Plainfield, Passaic City, Paterson, Rahway, South Orange/

Maplewood, Union City, Wanaque and West Orange) in 7 different counties (Bergen, Hudson, Sussex, Passaic, Union and Somerset).

Please take the information above into consideration during the decision making process related to school closure and or school dismissal.

We are prepared to provide delivery of services electronically and via traditional instruction.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely Yours,

Dr. Anthony Hadzimichalis