



Tom Reed-Swale, Principal Bethany Community School

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May 19, 2020

BCS Families,

Welcome to real spring! I hope that you have enjoyed this wonderfully warm weather as much as I have over the past few days. It feels good to have the sun on my face again without it being 40 degrees out.

Our focus right now is to finish planning for the end of the year, develop our Special Education Extended School Year Program, and begin to make plans for the start of next school year. I wish I could give you an update on what that might look like. I cannot. We are making several plans, but do not have either enough guidance or information from the Connecticut State Department of Education to make a definitive plan. When we have more of both, we will share that plan with you.

As with everything, the updates shared below are done so with the lens of “at this time.” Things may change and we will do our best to be flexible and adapt if necessary. That being said, here are some updates regarding Distance Learning and our plans for the end of the year.

Important Dates:

- **½ Day for Students:**
 - **Friday, May 22nd** - This Friday, we will follow our ½ day schedule and staff will attend professional learning in the afternoon.
- **Next Grade Preview Day:**
 - **Monday, June 8th**
- **Virtual Field Day:**
 - **Tuesday, June 9th** - Mr. Labbate is working diligently to create a wonderful day of outside activity for BCS students. This will be a day dedicated to Field Day. Academic lessons and interventions will not be held so that families can participate. Mr. Labbate will have an update to you soon.
- **PreK Graduation:**
 - **Wednesday, June 10th**
- **Kindergarten Graduation:**
 - **Thursday, June 11th**
- **6th Grade Graduation:**
 - **Friday, June 12th**
- **Last Day of School:**
 - **Friday, June 12th** - This will be the last day of school for students.



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Additional Updates:

- **Community Connection** – This week we are celebrating those essential workers, doctors, nurses, EMTs, Police, and Firefighters in our community. If you can, we would like you and your child(ren) to make a “Thank You” sign for any of these amazing people. Hang it up in your window or on your front door and take a picture. Those pictures can then be sent to Mr. Reed-Swale and we will make them into a Thank You Slideshow from the BCS Community to the entire Bethany Community.
- **Distance Learning Surveys** – We will have a Distance Learning Survey out to all families, Grades 3-6 students, and staff by the end of the week. The goal of this survey is to better understand what has gone well and what can be improved in regards to Distance Learning. Our goal is to use this information to make informed decisions regarding potential Distance Learning in the future.
- **Report Cards** –
 - As a result of the current Distance Learning environment, the report card you receive for the third marking period of the 2019-2020 school year will be modified based on our work during Distance Learning. The grades and reporting from both the first and second marking periods will remain the same.
 - Since we were not able to administer assessments during Distance Learning, a decision was made to have teachers provide feedback on assignments in lieu of assigning grades. Therefore, putting a grade on the third marking period report card would not reflect accurate or objective information. Instead, teachers are marking areas of the curriculum that have been covered during the time of Distance Learning. These areas will be marked with an “X” in the column for marking period three.
 - Grades will not be assigned for the Academic Success Habits or effort portions of the report card in marking period three.
 - Finally, additional space has been provided on this report card for teachers to comment on the work your child has submitted during Distance Learning and to provide suggestions for additional work your child can complete over the summer to help prepare for the next school year.
 - Our efforts to modify the third marking period report card are necessary to ensure that we maintain an equitable, objective, and accurate system of reporting during Distance Learning. We appreciate your support and flexibility during this time.
- **End of Year Promotion Ceremonies (PK/K/6th)** – Please see the dates above. We have developed a plan for these and will send them out to each family for those grades.



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- **Class Placement** – Thank you for sending in your feedback. As with any request for placement, we will consider, but cannot guarantee any request.
- **Material Exchange** – At this time, we are working with staff to get student belongings organized and prepared for distribution on June 16th. We will create a schedule for families to pick up their child's items and return school items like Chromebooks, library books, and other materials that were distributed to families over the course of the year. Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Carpenter, and Mr. Bruder will have more information regarding this to you soon.
- **Family Check-Ins** – We recognize that cancelling conferences in March has left a gap in our communication with families. To remedy this, I have asked staff to schedule family check-ins for next week. All classroom teachers will work with each of their families to schedule a time to check-in and chat. Case managers for students receiving Special Education, Eureka, or Intervention services will reach out to make one of their scheduled appointments next week a family check-in. Finally, all specials teachers are available next week to connect with families as well. Their contact information will be shared on Google Classroom. We hope that this time will be a chance for us to connect with families. **It will not be a traditional "conference" as the focus will be on having a discussion about your child and how they are handling Distance Learning.** If you would like to discuss academic data, you may bring it up, but please know that due to the nature of Distance Learning, your child's teacher may not have as specific information as you are used to. Once we return and are able to complete benchmark assessments, we will be able to have a better conversation that way.
- **Social-Emotional Support** – As we continue with Distance Learning, families may need additional support. If you or your child would like to schedule a check in with either Mrs. Nusom (School Psychologist) or Mrs. Spagnoletti (Guidance Counselor), please email them to schedule an appointment: mnusom@bethany-ed.org & tspagnoletti@bethany-ed.org. The team has also put together some new resources and linked to some supports created by the state of Connecticut for families. Everything is updated on [their website](#).

Please visit and "like" Facebook Page: [@BethanyCommunitySchoolCT](#) and follow our Twitter Feed: [@BCS_CT](#) We post to them regularly. You can also visit the BCS [COVID-19 Website](#) for the most up to date information from the district. Have a wonderful week.

All the best,

Tom Reed-Swale