

Darien Public Schools - Administrative Offices

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March 13, 2020

Dear Families and Staff,

Yesterday, I spoke the Commissioner of Education and in the afternoon participated in a statewide conference call for school superintendents. This is an update communication on eLearning and the makeup days in the event that schools were to be closed for a period longer than the ten (10) days from March 12-March 25.

School Days

Connecticut State Statute requires each school district to provide no less than one hundred and eighty days of school. As previously shared, with one snow day and ten days of closure due to the Coronavirus, the last day of school would be scheduled for June 30th. Governor Lamont's announcement yesterday that the State is waiving the 180-day requirement still requires districts to attempt to meet this requirement. At this point, if our District misses any additional days (beyond the ten) it is possible that we may need to use April break as make-up days. Given the exceptionality of the circumstances and the uncertainty of the next several weeks we will continue to monitor this situation and keep families up to date.

eLearning

As you know, our staff has worked tirelessly and creatively over the past weeks to create enrichment experiences that all students will be able to access while schools are closed. eLearning experiences incorporate a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities.

The Commissioner's strong recommendation today was for districts not to conduct remote synchronous learning experiences in lieu of onsite schooling but rather to provide supplemental asynchronous activities. This is a different stance from previous communications from the State Department of Education. Reasons for the recommendation focus on the ability of Districts to deliver with fidelity the educational services to all students as prescribed by state, local and federal laws. Given this position, the District is not submitting a waiver to provide remote synchronous learning experiences in lieu of onsite schooling.

Fortunately, our staff was preparing for both eLearning scenarios. In absence of a waiver, our staff has designed rich and varied asynchronous eLearning activities that students can access at their own pace and convenience. Resources are accessible for all students in both general and special education. The eLearning resources can be accessed from the main page on the District website at 8:00 a.m. on Monday morning, March 16th. These activities are voluntary and students are not required to participate. The activities are not intended to replace classroom instruction. The goal is to offer opportunities for students to access enrichment, practice skills, and have structure to the day.

Thank you for your continued understanding and assistance as we navigate the next few days and weeks. District administrators will continue to provide you with regular updates while school is out.

Sincerely,

Alan Addley

Dr. Alan Addley
Superintendent of Schools