

## Darien Public Schools - Administrative Offices

35 Leroy Avenue – P.O. Box 1167 – Darien, Connecticut 06820-1167  
Tel: 203-656-7412 Email: [aaddley@darienps.org](mailto:aaddley@darienps.org)

March 29, 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope this communication finds your family well on this rainy weekend. Like everyone, most of you have passed the time in recent few weeks working from home and supporting your child's learning. For many families, your life right now might resemble a Hallmark rerun of the beloved family story of *The Waltons* as your family rallies together to work through these tough times.

As the District concludes a second week of eLearning, thank you for all of your efforts to support your child's teachers and their learning. I am tremendously proud and grateful for the school community's collective efforts and accomplishments thus far. Like staff, you are probably finding this work exhausting and overwhelming. Your support for your child's education is always necessary and appreciated; however, despite how it might feel, the District has no expectations for you to assume the role of our certified teachers while you are home. Simply do your best to provide your child with a quiet work space, support, assistance, and maintain communication with your child's teachers.

Our staff has done a magnificent job thus far implementing eLearning but, at the same time, we know it is not perfect. As we turn the corner into week three, it is a good time to reflect on how effectively we are implementing eLearning practices and to make any necessary adjustments. Upon reflection, we learned we need to move slowly and reflectively through the next few weeks of teaching and eLearning in order not to overwhelm students, parents, or teachers. As we transition into next week, teachers will focus their time on developing and implementing new lessons aligned to the curriculum scope and sequence. We know students will not be returning to school before April 20th and it is increasingly likely we will be delivering this mode of instruction for an extended duration of time, perhaps even through the end of the school year. Taking a collective pause now and going slower will ultimately better serve our students, parents and teachers. Making such modifications is essential to the learning process. I ask for your continued patience and support for the staff as they refine their practices while adopting this slower approach.

It is important that we collectively recognize that eLearning is not easy for staff or parents as everyone juggles work and parenting responsibilities. The longer we are out of school, the more unlikely it is that teachers will not be able to cover and teach the entire grade level curriculum. Adjustments will be made to next year's curriculum scope and sequence and perhaps subsequent years' curriculum in order to catch up. Specific adjustments to the scope and sequence will depend on the content being taught.

## A Few Other Matters

At their regular meeting on Tuesday, the Board Education cancelled April Vacation and set the date for graduation. April break is replaced with a long weekend. School/eLearning will not be in session Friday, April 10 and Monday, April 13. Graduation is Thursday, June 11.

The District will explore the best way to reschedule parent conferences. Details to follow.

Tomorrow, parents of students who receive Special Education Services will receive additional information from Shirley K. Klein, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education & Student Services, on the District practices related to Special Education during the school closure.

The District continues to collaborate with surrounding school districts on grading practices to be employed during the period of school closure.

The design of the elementary, middle school and secondary schedules were reflective of developmentally appropriate structures for instruction and curriculum; support and interventions; independent learning opportunities; teacher planning; and screen time for students.

On Friday, the District said farewell to Dr. Susie Da Silva as she assumes her new position this coming week as Superintendent of Schools for the Ridgefield Public Schools. Dr. Da Silva has provided Darien with exceptional leadership during the past five years, most notably improving curriculum, teaching and student learning across the District. Tomorrow morning, we welcome Mr. Christopher Tranberg to the District as he assumes his new position as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

Thank you for your continued understanding and assistance as we face this public health crisis together. Be well and, like *The Walton's*, look after each other and rally the family knowing you will get through these difficult times together.

Sincerely,

*Alan Addley*

Dr. Alan Addley  
Superintendent of Schools