

Darien Public Schools - Administrative Offices

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May 6, 2020

Dear Parents,

Good morning. I trust this finds your family well. Here are a few COVID-19 eLearning updates:

School Closures: As you probably know, yesterday, Governor Lamont announced that schools will remain closed and students will continue with eLearning for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. While the decision was expected and understandable, the announcement nonetheless reflects a sad conclusion to the school year for students and staff, especially for our distinguished members of the senior class.

Graduation and Moving up Ceremonies: The Governor specifically recommended that schools should not come together for graduation ceremonies. All of our schools are actively working with members of their school communities to plan meaningful culminating experiences to the school year for our students. The Blue Wave spirit will rise to this challenge to ensure our seniors have a meaningful recognition of their accomplishments and a fun celebratory farewell. The Commissioner of Education will share further guidance on graduation ceremonies later this afternoon in a meeting with school superintendents. Just a reminder the last day of school for students is Thursday, June 11.

Summer School and Extended School Year Programs: Yesterday, the Commissioner of Education indicated that summer schools could be opened with some social distancing requirements in July. Additional guidance from the Commissioner will be forthcoming later in the month. The District is considering the viability and possible options for summer school. ESY continues to be planned with all stakeholders. The special education department is considering eLearning options if school closure is extended through the summer months

Lunches: Grab-and-Go bagged lunches will continue to be available to any Darien student Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Middlesex Middle School through the remainder of the school year.

Reopening: The District is developing reopening practices and protocols. These will continue to be refined as new information and guidelines are received. In developing these guidelines, the Commissioner of Education has enlisted the

help of the six Regional Education Service Centers to gather and analyze the issues pertaining to reopening schools in the fall. The online tool *ThoughtExchange*, is being used to collect feedback from all constituents. You can provide feedback on the reopening of schools by accessing the following link: <https://my.thoughtexchange.com/493894984>

Special Education: The special education and student services department has designed an articulation and ESY planning structure that allows for parent participation and efficacy of District personnel. Meetings have commenced and will continue over the coming weeks.

eLearning: As eLearning continues to evolve and teachers now plan to deliver curriculum and instruction through the remainder of the school year, May 15, May 22, and June 5 have been identified as half-day Fridays for students and collaborative work afternoons for staff. We hope these afternoons will also serve to provide a respite for students and parents from the eLearning routine. You will receive additional information about these days from your principal.

Athletics: The CIAC spring sports season is canceled. CIAC will be developing guidelines for summer athletics and reopening for sports in the fall.

The District will provide additional communication and updates as decisions are made and as information is received from the state.

Finally, this is National Teacher Appreciation Week when we recognize and honor the tremendous work of our dedicated and talented staff. In doing so, we also say a huge thank you to all of our Darien parents for your wonderful efforts to support teaching and learning in your home classrooms!

Sincerely and with continued gratitude,

Alan

Dr. Alan Addley
Superintendent of Schools