

Newsletter

Superintendent Goguen

April 13, 2020

Dear Students, Staff and Families,

We continue sending our very best to all our students, families and staff during this health emergency we are facing as a nation. We hope that everyone had joyous Easter and good health and happiness for Passover to those who celebrate.

Important reminders:

- We want to remind families that there will be **no remote learning during April Vacation - April 20-24**. The decision to keep the vacation period was made in an effort to give students, families and staff time to adjust to all the rapid changes we have been facing.
- Starting today we will be condensing the WMS and BHS food distribution centers to one location at BHS. A new drop off food distribution center will begin this week in the Head Start Parking Lot. **We will continue to have food distribution centers at PAE, BHS, North Village and now a new drop off spot in the parking lot of Head Start.**

Everyone's safety is the utmost priority during the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to urge students, families, and staff to abide by the stay at home order, wash their hands frequently and maintain social distancing of six feet from others. With the increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases and the prediction that the next few weeks will be a critical time to stay safe, we all have to take on even more safety precautions. The CDC is now recommending for everyone to wear non-surgical masks in public and to refrain from doing anything other than essential business, such as going to the grocery store. It is also recommended that groceries be washed down. Each week we learn more and we continue to make adjustments to keep everyone safe. This past week, in conjunction with the Town of Webster, we shut down the PAE playground and BHS/WMS basketball courts, to eliminate these spots as potential areas for spreading this disease.

There certainly are a lot of stressors associated with COVID-19. Discovering new routines in our lives, when all of our lives have been literally turned upside down, is difficult for everyone. This week our school psychologist, Ms. Wisnosky shared some very good tips from Dr. West, a professor and department chair at Quinsigamond Community College. This information is being shared to assist everyone with positive ways to deal with the drastic changes we are all experiencing in our daily lives due to COVID-19.



Parent Webinar – April 16th



On Thursday, April 16, Trevor Packer, the head of the AP program, will be hosting a parent webinar to share with parents key tips to help their child prepare for this year's AP Exams. The webinar will be available at the same link on-demand following the presentation. The tests will be 45 minutes long, open book and open note, and given simultaneously across time zones.

https://globalmeet.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1302024&tp_key=73070ccd21

MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS TIPS FOR QUARANTINE by Dr. Doe West

1. Stick to a routine. Go to sleep and wake up at a reasonable time, write a schedule that is varied and includes time for work as well as self-care.
2. Dress for the social life you want, not the social life you have. Get showered and dressed in comfortable clothes, wash your face, brush your teeth. Take the time to do a bath or a facial. Put on some bright colors. It is amazing how our dress can impact our mood.
3. Get out at least once a day, for at least thirty minutes. If you are concerned about contact, try first thing in the morning, or later in the evening, and try less traveled streets and avenues. If you are high risk or living with those who are high risk, open the windows and blast the fan. It is amazing how much fresh air can do for spirits.
4. Find some time to move each day, again daily for at least thirty minutes. If you don't feel comfortable going outside, there are many YouTube videos that offer free movement classes, and if all else fails, turn on the music and have a dance party!
5. Reach out to others; you guessed it, at least once daily for thirty minutes. Try to do FaceTime, Skype, phone calls, texting—connect with other people to seek and provide support. Don't forget to do this for your children as well. Set up virtual playdates with friends daily via FaceTime, Facebook Messenger Kids, Zoom, etc.—your kids miss their friends, too!
6. Stay hydrated and eat well. This one may seem obvious, but stress and eating often don't mix well, and we find ourselves over-indulging, forgetting to eat, and avoiding food. Drink plenty of water, eat some good and nutritious foods, and challenge yourself to learn how to cook something new!
7. Develop a self-care toolkit. This can look different for everyone. A lot of successful self-care strategies involve a sensory component (seven senses: touch, taste, sight, hearing, smell, vestibular (movement) and proprioceptive (comforting pressure)). An idea for each: a soft blanket or stuffed animal, a hot chocolate, photos of vacations, comforting music, lavender or eucalyptus oil, a small swing or rocking chair, a weighted blanket. A journal, an inspirational book, or a mandala coloring book is wonderful, bubbles to blow or blowing watercolor on paper through a straw are visually appealing as well as work on controlled breath. Mint gum, Listerine strips, ginger ale, frozen Starburst, ice packs, and cold are also good for anxiety regulation. For children, it is great to help them create a self-regulation comfort box (often a shoe-box or bin they can decorate) that they can use on the ready for first-aid when overwhelmed.
8. Spend extra time playing with children. Children will rarely communicate how they are feeling, but will often make a bid for attention and communication through play. Don't be surprised to see therapeutic themes of illness, doctor visits, and isolation play through. Understand that play is cathartic and helpful for children—it is how they process their world and problem-solve, and there's a lot they are seeing and experiencing in the now.
9. Give everyone the benefit of the doubt, and a wide berth. A lot of cooped up time can bring out the worst in everyone. Each person will have moments when they will not be at their best. It is important to move with grace through blowups, to not show up to every argument you are invited to, and to not hold grudges and continue disagreements. Everyone is doing the best they can to make it through this.

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10. Everyone finds their own retreat space. Space is at a premium, particularly with city living. It is important that people think through their own separate space for work and for relaxation. For children, help them identify a place where they can go to retreat when stressed. You can make this place cozy by using blankets, pillows, cushions, scarves, beanbags, tents, and “forts”. It is good to know that even when we are on top of each other, we have our own special place to go to be alone.
 11. Expect behavioral issues in children, and respond gently. We are all struggling with disruption in routine, none more than children, who rely on routines constructed by others to make them feel safe and to know what comes next. Expect increased anxiety, worries and fears, nightmares, difficulty separating or sleeping, testing limits, and meltdowns. Do not introduce major behavioral plans or consequences at this time—hold stable and focus on emotional connection.
 12. Focus on safety and attachment. We are going to be living for a bit with the unprecedented demand of meeting all work deadlines, homeschooling children, running a sterile household, and making a whole lot of entertainment in confinement. We can get wrapped up in meeting expectations in all domains, but we must remember that these are scary and unpredictable times for children. Focus on strengthening the connection through time spent following their lead, through physical touch, through play, through therapeutic books, and via verbal reassurances that you will be there for them in this time.
 13. Lower expectations and practice radical self-acceptance. This idea is connected with #12. We are doing too many things at this moment, under fear and stress. This does not make a formula for excellence. Instead, give yourself what psychologists call “radical self-acceptance”: accepting everything about yourself, your current situation, and your life without question, blame, or pushback. You cannot fail at this—there is no roadmap, no precedent for this, and we are all truly doing the best we can in an impossible situation.
 14. Limit social media and COVID conversation, especially around children. One can find tons of information on COVID-19 to consume, and it changes minute to minute. The information is often sensationalized, negatively skewed, and alarmist. Find a few trusted sources that you can check in with consistently, limit it to a few times a day, and set a time limit for yourself on how much you consume (again 30 minutes tops, 2-3 times daily). Keep news and alarming conversations out of earshot from children—they see and hear everything, and can become very frightened by what they hear.
 15. Notice the good in the world, the helpers. There is a lot of scary, negative, and overwhelming information to take in regarding this pandemic. There are also a ton of stories of people sacrificing, donating, and supporting one another in miraculous ways. It is important to counterbalance the heavy information with the hopeful information.
 16. Help others. Find ways, big and small, to give back to others. Support restaurants, offer to grocery shop, check in with elderly neighbors, write psychological wellness tips for others—helping others gives us a sense of agency when things seem out of control.
 17. Find something you can control, and control the heck out of it. In moments of big uncertainty and overwhelm, control your little corner of the world. Organize your bookshelf, purge your closet, put together that furniture, and group your toys. It helps to anchor and ground us when the bigger things are chaotic.
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18. Find a long-term project to dive into. Now is the time to learn how to play the keyboard, put together a huge jigsaw puzzle, start a 15 hour game of Risk, paint a picture, read the Harry Potter series, binge watch an 8-season show, crochet a blanket, solve a Rubix cube, or develop a new town in Animal Crossing. Find something that will keep you busy, distracted, and engaged to take breaks from what is going on in the outside world.
 19. Engage in repetitive movements and left-right movements. Research has shown that repetitive movement (knitting, coloring, painting, clay sculpting, jump roping etc.) especially left-right movement (running, drumming, skating, hopping) can be effective at self-soothing and maintaining self-regulation in moments of distress.
 20. Find an expressive art and go for it. Our emotional brain is very receptive to the creative arts, and it is a direct portal for release of feeling. Find something that is creative (sculpting, drawing, dancing, music, singing, playing) and give it your all. See how relieved you can feel. It is a very effective way of helping kids to emote and communicate as well!
 21. Find lightness and humor in each day. There is a lot to be worried about, and with good reason. Counterbalance this heaviness with something funny each day: cat videos on YouTube, a stand-up show on Netflix, a funny movie—we all need a little comedic relief in our day, every day.
 22. Reach out for help—your team is there for you. If you have a therapist or psychiatrist, they are available to you, even at a distance. Keep up your medications and your therapy sessions the best you can. If you are having difficulty coping, seek out help for the first time. There are mental health people on the ready to help you through this crisis. Your children's teachers and related service providers will do anything within their power to help, especially for those parents tasked with the difficult task of being a whole treatment team to their child with special challenges. Seek support groups of fellow home-schoolers, parents, and neighbors to feel connected. There is help and support out there, any time of the day—although we are physically distant, we can always connect virtually.
 23. “Chunk” your quarantine, take it moment by moment. We have no road map for this. We don't know what this will look like in 1 day, 1 week, or 1 month from now. Often, when I work with patients who have anxiety around overwhelming issues, I suggest that they engage in a strategy called “chunking”—focusing on whatever bite-sized piece of a challenge that feels manageable. Whether that be 5 minutes, a day, or a week at a time—find what feels doable for you, and set a time stamp for how far ahead in the future you will let yourself worry. Take each chunk one at a time, and move through stress in pieces.
 24. Remind yourself daily that this is temporary. It seems in the midst of this quarantine that it will never end. It is terrifying to think of the road stretching ahead of us. Please take time to remind yourself that although this is very scary and difficult, and will go on for an undetermined amount of time, it is a season of life and it will pass. We will return to feeling free, safe, busy, and connected in the days ahead.
 25. Find the lesson. This whole crisis can seem sad, senseless, and at times, avoidable. When psychologists work with trauma, a key feature to helping someone work through said trauma is to help them find their agency, the potential positive outcomes they can effect, the meaning and construction that can come out of destruction. What can each of us learn here, in big and small ways, from this crisis? What needs to change in ourselves, our homes, our communities, our nation, and our world?
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As we continue to support each other through this crisis here are some more resources for families:

DESE and WGBH Partnership for Educational Resources

PBS LearningMedia and WGBH's new online Distance Learning Center

The Department is partnering with WGBH to bring educational resources to students and families through television and digital media. WGBH has created [a distance learning site](#), and we hope to reach as many students and caregivers as possible. [PBS LearningMedia](#) is a free digital repository of tens of thousands of high-quality media resources that are contextualized for educational use. The resources span disciplines for grades PreK-12, are aligned to national and state standards, and include videos, comprehensive lessons, interactive activities, and support materials (teaching tips, background readings, and student handouts). Here are just a few collections on PBS LearningMedia to explore:

- **Bringing the Universe to America's Classrooms:** Earth and space science, created in collaboration with NASA. Grades K–12.
- **AMERICAN EXPERIENCE:** History and social studies resources from one of public media's flagship broadcasts. Grades 4–12.
- **ARTHUR:** Beloved characters keep the focus on community, civics, and social-emotional learning. Grades PreK–5.
- **Molly of Denali:** The MOLLY OF DENALI™ collection offers videos, digital games, lessons, teaching tips, and activities with a focus on informational text. Grades PreK–2.
- **Math at the Core Middle School:** Engaging media and integrated activities, all aligned with the Massachusetts mathematics standards . Grades 5–8.
- **Inspiring Middle School Literacy:** Self-paced lessons include videos, interactive activities, note taking, reading, and writing to present students with engaging science, social studies, mathematics, and English language arts topics. Grades 5–8.
- **NOVA Education Resources:** Authentic, real-world science learning. Grades 7–13+.

Digital Resources designed for remote learning and available free of charge:

English Language Arts and Literacy

Keep your child reading every day.

- **CommonLit:** A free collection of fiction and nonfiction texts for grades 3–12. Includes an annotation tool, guiding and discussion questions, translations in various languages, and texts read aloud.
- **Great Minds:** Great Minds has daily lessons in Wit & Wisdom (English language arts) available for free for students in grades K–8 . These lessons will be delivered by Great Minds' own teachers and will be viewable on any device.
- **Heggerty:** Free activities to build foundational reading skills. These are best for ages 4–6.
- **Hoopla** and **OverDrive:** Many local public libraries use these two apps to allow users to borrow digital books for free. Visit your local library's website and look for the section on digital resources.
- **StoryLine Online:** Hear quality children's literature read aloud and see illustrations.

History, Social Studies, and Civics

- [iCivics](#): iCivics offers free, engaging civics content, including lesson plans and games for students to play digitally, content about media literacy, and Advanced Placement (AP) U.S. Government and Politics prep.
- [EVERFI](#): Offers interactive financial literacy and social and emotional learning lessons. They have a bank of free digital lessons that can be accessed by [registering](#) as a student or a teacher.
- [Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History](#): This website is geared specifically at preparing AP U.S. History students virtually. It includes primary sources, essays, videos, and study guides aligned with the AP curriculum.
- [National Constitution Center](#): In addition to the interactive Constitution tool, they host several educational resources and games.
- [Stanford History Education Group](#): The Reading Like a Historian curriculum is free with registration and offers ready-to-go lessons on world and U.S. history based on primary source investigations.

STEM [Science and Technology/Engineering, Mathematics, Digital Literacy and Computer Science]

- [Code.org](#): Provides learning resources that help students learn about computer science and programming on their own. Offerings include [Computer Science \(CS\) Fundamentals](#) for K–5 and online courses and labs for middle and high school (CS Express, App Lab, Game Lab, and Web Lab).
- [Great Minds](#): Free daily lessons available in grades 3–5 science and grades K–12 Eureka Math. These lessons will be delivered by Great Minds' own teachers and will be viewable on any device. In addition, access to the full K–12 [Eureka Math program](#) is available for free.
- [Khan Academy](#): Khan Academy has outlined [support for parents and educators](#) on how to use their resources during remote learning. Khan Academy is a free resource for students, teachers, and parents with a library of lessons covering kindergarten through early college math, grammar, science, history, plus AP courses, SAT preparation, and more. Available in 40 languages.
- [PhET Online Simulations](#): A library of online simulations that students can play with and explore to investigate scientific and mathematical models. Can be sorted by grade level.
- [Smithsonian Science How Webcast](#): These webcasts originally aired live from the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. They're great for students in grades 3–8 and are optimized for students in grades 3–5.
- [ST Math](#): A web-based visual instructional program that leads to deep conceptual understanding of math. ST Math is offering parents free access through June 30 for grades K–8.
- [Zearn K-5 Mathematics](#): [Zearn](#) has made its entire curriculum, including 400 hours of digital lessons with on-screen teachers and supportive remediation, available for free. To access these materials, go to the [Distance Learning Resource Center](#) for:
 - Quick-start instructions for using Zearn Math programmatically as part of a distance learning plan
 - Daily webinars for administrators, teachers, and parents to walk through quick-start instructions. Each webinar will offer 'office hours' with time for questions with the Zearn team.

Physical Education

- [Cosmic Kids Yoga](#): Provides videos on yoga, mindfulness, and relaxation.
- [GoNoodle](#): Free movement and mindfulness videos.

Arts (Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theater, and Visual arts)

- [Media Arts: Pencil Madness](#): Students can use a dashboard of options to create numerous layered effects similar to the concepts learned in Photoshop.
- Music: [Beepbox Music-Making On Your Home Computer](#): Support your child's music learning using this free online platform. No special equipment is needed to use this online tool for sketching and sharing instrumental melodies.
- Visual Art: Get local! The Drawing Act Project is happening right now here in Massachusetts! Anyone can participate by submitting a drawing this spring. The full directions for the drawing lesson are [outlined in this flyer](#). In addition, the [Incredible Art Department's Art Teacher Toolkit](#), has engaging visual art lessons that can be delivered at home. [Creative art activities and games](#) are available.

General Online Learning Resources (All or Multiple Content Areas)

- [SketchUp](#): In order to provide uninterrupted SketchUp access to the unprecedented numbers of students and teachers now working/studying from home, we have implemented some temporary changes to the way students can access SketchUp.
- [Brainpop](#): Free resources and tools that develop critical, computational, and creative thinking skills across the curriculum, especially for younger children. Available in Spanish, French, and English.
- [Listenwise](#): Supports listening comprehension with stories and non-fiction in English language arts, social studies and science. Subscriptions are free.
- [Newsela](#): Digital subscriptions for free in English language arts, social science, and science and supports social emotional learning.
- [Scholastic Learn at Home](#): General videos and learning activities.
- [TechforLearners.org](#): Searchable database of education technology tools that facilitate online classrooms and teaching, allowing educators to search for free and discounted tools and services by grade level, product type, and subject matter. The site will soon include additional resources for parents and students.
- [WatchKnowLearn](#): Free educational videos in all content areas.

Resources for English Learners

- [Guidance on the Provisional Identification and Placement of English Learners](#) : This document provides guidance on the provisional identification and placement of English learners while continuity of education services are being provided remotely and face-to-face screening is not possible.
- [Guidance on Remote Learning for English Learners](#) : This guidance includes recommended strategies and resources to help educators continue to provide ELE services and to keep English learners engaged while they learn remotely during this period of school closure.

- [Remote Learning Resources to Help Meet the Needs of English Learners](#) : This list of online educational opportunities includes tools and resources for English learners and for the educators and families who are supporting their learning.

Supporting Students with Disabilities

- The Massachusetts Council for Exceptional Children (MCEC) has created an [open-access resource folder](#) for Massachusetts educators in order to exchange educational resources. General education and special education teachers are encouraged to share resources through this online forum. For ease of use, MCEC has created individual folders by grade level, from preschool through secondary transition.
- Special education teachers, general education teachers, related service providers, and administrators are encouraged to reach out to students and families by phone, email, and other means of communication in order to ensure that students with disabilities can access educational resources provided by the district.

WGBH:

- The [PBS KIDS 24/7 channel](#) offers anytime access to trusted educational series for kids ages 2-8 (check local listings).
- [PBS KIDS for Parents](#) offers information, activities and tips, including this article on "[How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus](#)"
- The [PBS KIDS Games](#) app offers nearly 200 educational games that can be downloaded for offline play anytime, anywhere. Learn more about these and PBS KIDS' other apps [HERE](#) .
- The [PBS KIDS Video app](#) is available on mobile, tablet and connected TV devices and offers on-demand educational videos, and a livestream of the PBS KIDS 24/7 channel. No subscription required.

Tumblebooks:

TumbleBook Library is one of three online libraries providing unlimited remote access in a unique reading format. We are sure that you will love your experience with the TumbleBookLibrary, and it will soon become an invaluable educational resource to your child. The Tumblebook Group is constantly adding new ebooks, picture books, puzzles and games as well as other teaching resources. The Language Learning section has a growing collection of books in Spanish and French, too! Anyone can access this from home or school, all you need is the username and password. The website is www.tumblebooklibrary.com the user name is: **websterps** and the password is: **book** or you can simply click on the following links to log-in automatically.

Internet Access:

<https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-to-offer-free-access-to-spectrum-broadband-and-wifi-for-60-days-for-new-K12-and-college-student-households-and-more>

YOU Inc.

▪ **Agencies available to provide resources**

- *Mass 211*- Just dial 211
- *Family Resource Center* (for the Southbridge location call 508-765-9101)

Hours:

Monday 8:30 AM-4:30 PM
Tuesday 8:30 AM- 6:00 PM
Wednesday 8:30 AM- 6:00 PM
Thursday 8:30 AM- 6:00 PM
Friday 8:30 AM -4:30 PM

- **Project Bread** (Resources for food and assistance with SNAP application)
<http://www.projectbread.org/>

1-800-645-8333
TTY 1-800-377-1292

Hotline Hours:

Monday – Friday ~ 8 A.M. - 7 P.M.
Saturday ~ 10A.M. - 2 P.M.

▪ **Food:**

- Salvation Army- vouchers for food
- School Food Distribution Centers in Webster at BHS, PAE and North Village
Monday thru Fr
- Worcester County Food Bank : <https://foodbank.org/>
- WIC- is open their regular hours but working remotely (via the phone and email)

Hours:

Monday	10:30AM–6:30PM
Tuesday	8:30AM–4:30PM
Wednesday	8:30AM–4:30PM
Thursday	11:30AM–7:30PM
Friday	8:30AM–4:30PM
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed

▪ **Housing/Shelter:**

- Families who need to apply for EA Shelter should call remote line 1-866 584-0653 (families household should not go to local DHS/DTA office –will be closed to visitors)
- Shelter families should reach out their case manager if they need assistance with food, cleaning supplies, other means of mitigating the spread of COVID19
- Evictions (and other housing court cases) are currently suspended. All current eviction cases are postponed until no earlier than April 21, 2020. The housing courts are only hearing emergency matters at least until April 6.
- You should receive a notice of your new court date in the mail, or you can check your case at www.masscourts.org. You can also call the Central Housing Court number at (508) 831-2050
- If your court date was after March 1, 2020 and a “default” judgment entered against you, you can file a “motion to remove the default” and it “shall be granted.”
- Landlords can still contact you to negotiate an agreement in a pending case—seek advice before signing anything or wait until your court date to reach an agreement.
- Move-outs can still be scheduled for people who lost their housing court case already. If you receive a notice from the sheriff telling you that you are scheduled to be moved out, contact the housing court (see below).
- The housing courts are only hearing emergency matters at this time. For a case to be heard before April 6th, you or your landlord needs to ask the court to hear the case and explain why it is urgent that your case be heard immediately. Emergency matters are where:
 - The tenant(s) received a 48 Hour Notice (that is, immediately facing move-out by the sheriff);
 - There is no heat, no hot water, or where the property is condemned;
 - The landlord is threatening to change the locks or evict the tenant without judicial process;
 - The condition of the apartment or the conduct of tenant threatens the health or safety of the residents.
- If you cannot afford to pay your bill during the COVID-19 crisis, utility companies cannot shut off your service. Massachusetts has extended a moratorium on utility shutoffs for the duration of the State of Emergency.
- If you live in state-aided public housing and lose income, you can seek a decrease in your rent. Contact your housing provider/housing authority to request an interim recertification of your rental portion. Agencies are directed to accept electronic and prospective documentation for verifications during this time. Any rent change will go into effect on the first day of the following month, at the latest.
- Coronavirus doesn't recognize race, nationality, or ethnicity—and housing discrimination laws protect against discrimination by housing providers. Landlords are prohibited engaging in discriminatory conduct related to COVID-19 based on race, nationality, ethnicity, disability, religion, or any other protected classes.
- Online information is available at www.masslegalhelp.org.

▪ **Child Care:**

- *Except emergency child care program in Southbridge:*

Sarah & Richard Hardy YMCA
Child Development Center
115 Marcy Street Southbridge MA 01550
Paula Perrier 413-433-1223 / pperrier@ymcaofcm.org
Center-based or out-of-home

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 8:00 AM -5:00 PM

- https://eelead.force.com/apex/EEC_ChildCareEmergencyParents
- Parents that qualify: Healthcare workers with priority to healthcare workers working with COVID-19 patients, essential state workers, grocery store employees, emergency response personnel, law enforcement, transportation & infrastructure workers, sanitation workers, DCF-involved families, and families living in shelters.

• **Benefits**


- Apply for unemployment:
 - The latest information is at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-covid-19-unemployment-information>.
 - IF SOMEONE IS OUT OF WORK OR HAS HAD A REDUCTION IN HOURS FOR ANY REASON RELATED TO COVID-19, THEY SHOULD APPLY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION (UC) (unless they are getting paid sick leave from their employer) – claimants are eligible in any of these situations:
 - ❖ The business has shut down
 - ❖ Their hours have been reduced significantly
 - ❖ They have been told to stay home
 - ❖ They have to stay out to care for a child or other family member
- Apply through UI Online - <https://uionline.detma.org/Claimant/Core/Login.ASPX>
- If people can't use UI Online because of language, special needs, disability, etc., there is a form to set up a callback from DUA - <https://www.mass.gov/forms/covid-19-department-of-unemployment-assistance-contact-request>
- FMLA
- Short-term disability
- DTA (Cash, SNAP, etc.)
 - If you receive cash benefits (TAFDC/EAEDC), you can complete your appointment by phone rather than visiting the office in person during this crisis. The in-person meeting requirement is being suspended as a result of COVID-19. You can also apply for cash assistance over the phone by calling the local DTA office. Worcester: 508-767-3100 Fitchburg: 978-665-8700 Southbridge: 508-765-2400
 - Contact the Department of Transitional Assistance for SNAP general assistance at (877) 382-2363; contact the DTA Ombudsman office for with complaints or concerns regarding your case at 617-348-5354. Contact the Senior Assistance Unit if you are over 60 and need help with your SNAP case 833-712-8027.



- **Seniors:**

- Senior Nutrition Programs (e.g. Meals on Wheels) - (800) 243-4636
- Medication: CVS and Walgreens deliver

- **Healthcare:**

- If you lose income during the COVID-19 crisis, you may be eligible for improved public health insurance benefits. Make sure to report this change to MassHealth to see if you qualify for a different coverage level.
 - If you are uninsured, Mass Health Connector has extended the application period through April 25. This will help ensure that you can access services related to COVID-19 without facing additional cost barriers. You will need to apply online or by phone.
 - If you have MassHealth, you will be covered for testing and treatment for COVID-19, regardless of your plan. Contact your primary care provider first for a referral.
 - If you have private Massachusetts insurance, you will be covered for medically necessary testing and treatment for COVID-19. Please note that cost sharing, such as coinsurance and/or deductibles may apply and would be determined by your plan's specific benefits.
 - If you have a condition that requires medication, MassHealth is allowing early refills and 90-day supplies of medications.
 - If you are too sick to complete an application and need immediate treatment, you may be able to get temporary coverage. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) allows qualified hospitals to make presumptive eligibility determinations for immediate, time-limited Medicaid coverage using self-attested information from individuals who appear to be eligible, but are unable to complete a full application at that time. Certain limitations are waived if the individual has a presumptive COVID-19 diagnosis.
 - If you are an immigrant concerned about public charge, you will not be penalized for seeing COVID-19 testing, treatment or preventative care. Remember that using any public benefits will not impact you if you are a green card holder, U.S. citizen, refugee, asylum seeker, VAWA recipient, TPS holder, or holder of a U or T visa.
 - If you are undocumented and need healthcare, you may be eligible for MassHealth Limited. This coverage provides care for medical emergencies, including visits to an emergency room. Public charge does not apply to MassHealth Limited.
 - If you do not have a PCP, multiple local options exist to schedule an appointment with one:
 - UMass Memorial: Call 855-UMASS-MD or call either of its CareWell urgent care centers (Lincoln Street: 774-420-2111 or Greenwood Street: 774-420-2111).
 - St. Vincent: <http://www.stvincentmedgroup.com> or 1-844-MASS-DOC
 - Reliant Medical Group: <https://reliantmedicalgroup.org>
 - For Immigrant Families: USCIS announced that the agency will NOT consider "testing, treatment, nor preventative care (including vaccines, if a vaccine becomes available) related to COVID-19" in a public charge determination "even if such treatment is provided or paid for by one or more public benefits."
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- Contact the MassHealth Customer Service Center at (800) 841-2900 for various healthcare questions, or access enrollment assistance through Mass Health Connector at 1-877-MA-ENROLL (1-877-623-6765), or TTY 1-877-623-7773 for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled.

- **Other resources:**

- IRS has moved filing deadline to July 15
- Loan interest for federal loans are going to be waived
- RCAP is closed until April 21st, but they are working remotely.
<http://www.rcapsolutions.org/closing/>
- The RMV will implement a 60-day extension to the current expiration date for Class D, Class DMs, ID cards, and Learner's Permits within the RMV system. All individuals with expired/expiring credentials dated between March 1, 2020 and April 30, 2020, will continue to have an active status until sixty (60) days after the expiration date printed on their credential. This does not apply to immigrants whose end of stay in the United States is the same as the expiration date on their driver's license, ID card, or Learner's Permit.
- Call Community Legal Aid's intake line at 855.CLA.LEGAL (855.252.5342) if you are denied any of the above benefits or believe you have faced discrimination. You may also apply on line at Communitylegal.org.
- If you are not able to pay a bill because of the effects of the coronavirus, call the organization for information on how they can help. Most organizations are postponing due dates or helping in some type of way.
- National Grid:
Message from National Grid: We recognize that certain customers may experience financial difficulty as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, whether they or a family member fall ill, are required to quarantine, or because their income is otherwise affected. We hope to alleviate our affected customers' concerns about their electricity and natural gas service during this time.

As a result, National Grid is temporarily suspending collections-related activities, including service disconnections, to lessen any financial hardship the COVID-19 pandemic may have on our customers. These policies are effective immediately and will be in place through the end of April. We will evaluate their continued need at that time. Please note that regular billing will continue for all customers.
<https://www.nationalgridus.com/News/2020/03/National-Grid-Implements-Additional-Actions-to-Protect-Customers,-Employees-During-Pandemic/>
- Multilanguage information –
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1KmaFpW-NFoKy8_D0JrNKpUsNb15MFkSk
- <http://workplacementalhealth.org/Employer-Resources/Working-Remotely-During-COVID-19>
- Parents stress line counselor 800-632-8188
- <https://www.worcestercentralkidscalendar.com/>

It is truly hard to believe we have been out of school for 23 days today. I want to continue to stress how pleased I am with the initial structures we put in place to begin our remote learning journey. These structures continue to serve us well.

- Everyone across our district, from custodians, cafeteria staff, paraprofessionals, teachers, related service providers, and administrators are working **as a united team** to develop strong remote learning practices and provide ongoing supports for our students and families.
- It is amazing to think back ---we left school on March 12 and on March 16th all our teachers were working remotely reaching out to students with enrichment activities through various formats (Class Dojo, Google Meets, etc).

As we continue to maneuver through these challenging times, know that we are here to help. Please continue to stay safe.



In Webster ... Kindness Matters!

Dr. Ruthann Petrino-Goguen Ed.D, Superintendent of Schools