

Dear Families,

In the time since schools were closed on March 13, 2020 so much has changed for all of us. Different circumstances create different challenges, but I am proud to report that our students and parents are partnering with us to engage in the variety of learning experiences. Students are demonstrating their learning in new ways and developing strong skills as learners. We know it is not easy, and each day presents different challenges. We remain committed to supporting our students and parents, and encourage you to reach out to your teachers, counselors, or Principal if we can assist you or answer your questions.

Yesterday, the Governor announced that schools will remain closed through the end of the school year. This means that students will continue their school work in our online learning format through the last day of school on June 12th. This news brings forth a reality that is difficult for all of us to accept; that we will not be back together in our classrooms in each of our schools for this school year.

In particular, the impact for our high school seniors and families is very difficult as the traditional end-of-year experiences must be reconsidered and adjusted where possible. We have been planning for a variety of potential outcomes and will work to ensure that we are able to celebrate our seniors and create a memorable experience for their graduation. We are also well into our planning at Joel Elementary and Eliot Middle School for the end-of-year transition experiences and school events.

Please carefully review the information contained in this update as there is important information about district decisions regarding grade reporting for this last portion of the school year, attendance, regional planning for reopening of school, mental health supports available to students, and information about end-of-year event planning, including graduation.

Over the next few weeks, each school will be sharing information with parents about the plans for these transitions and important events in our schools. All of our local decisions will continue to be based on guidance from Governor Lamont, our state and local health departments, and the Connecticut State Department of Education. We hope that all of our students and families remain healthy and safe and we look forward to the time when we can all be back together in our school communities.

Sincerely,



Maryann R. O'Donnell
Superintendent of Schools

GRADING

The district administration has worked to develop meaningful online learning for this final marking period that is aligned with our established curriculum and supports the development of foundation skills and student habits of mind. Over the last two weeks the school staff has reviewed the guidance on grading provided by the State Department of Education and has developed a plan for modified grade reporting for each of our schools. On Monday night, the plan was presented to the Board of Education who reviewed the recommendations for grade reporting and supported the plan as outlined below. The plan for report cards and grading recognizes the unique and varied circumstances that students and parents are experiencing and that the current online learning is not the same as in-person schooling. As a result, decisions were made to adjust the approach to report cards for each of the schools.

For Information on grade reporting in each grade level span, click on the link provided:

[Grades PreK-5](#)

[Grades 6-8](#)

[Grades 9-12](#)

The schools will continue to provide important information and updates to families through the Weekly Blast. Please read and review these important messages to stay updated with new information.

ATTENDANCE

The district and each school has established a system for recording weekly student attendance and engagement. Teachers, counselors, and administrators will be reaching out through email and phone calls to parents of students who are not engaging. It is important to maintain communication with your child's school and to notify the school if your child is having difficulty with online learning or if there are circumstances that are impeding engagement in the learning.

END OF SCHOOL YEAR PLANNING

Our school administrators and staff are in the process of finalizing alternate plans for end-of-year celebrations. We understand the impact of the news that we will not be returning to our school buildings for the remainder of the year. At the core of our planning is to ensure that we appropriately recognize our students and celebrate their accomplishments. All decisions are being crafted to ensure safety of our students, families, and staff, and will follow all current public health guidelines as determined and coordinated with our Local Health Director. As plans are determined, they will be

shared with the impacted students and families by the school administrators utilizing our normal messaging platforms.

SPECIAL SERVICES UPDATE FROM DIRECTOR KIMBERLY PEARCE

Thank you for all of your support and collaboration with us as we work to provide students with IEP services during online learning.

We are in the process of scheduling virtual planning and placement team (PPT) meetings to take place when necessary. Your child's case manager will be in touch with you regarding PPT scheduling and logistics if they will be recommending that a PPT meeting take place before the end of the school year. As it is not possible to convene meetings in person at this time due to the ongoing public health crisis, your child's case manager will review the meeting process with you in advance in order to help you meaningfully participate in the process virtually. Please communicate directly with the case manager if you have questions.

For students who participate in Extended School Year (ESY) services, we are awaiting further guidance from the State regarding whether or not we will be able to open our school buildings in order to provide this support on site. At this point in time, we are continuing to plan for ESY as originally scheduled. Should these circumstances change, your child's case manager will be in touch with you to discuss the alternative plans for your child.

REQUEST FOR REGIONAL PARENT & STAFF INPUT ON THE PROCESS FOR REOPENING SCHOOLS

Please read the important announcement from LEARN, our Regional Education Service Center seeking input from our staff and parents.

The Commissioner of Education has enlisted the help of the six Regional Education Service Centers (RESC) to form teams of Connecticut education stakeholders for the purpose of gathering, analyzing, and sharing the issues, concerns, and ideas related to the process of reopening schools. An online tool will be used to make the gathering of feedback more efficient and to reflect all the different regions and constituent groups across the state. The tool, "ThoughtExchange," is entirely confidential and anonymous to use. Your participation and feedback are essential to the process and necessary for our State leaders to consider as decisions are made about reopening our schools. I encourage everyone to use the link below to share your thoughts and help evaluate the critical issues.

Thought Exchange Link: <https://my.thoughtexchange.com/493894984>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Clinton Public Schools Mental Health Supports

During this period of online learning, the Clinton Public Schools Counseling Team is committed to continuing to provide support to our students and families. The following link will take you to a webpage and allow you to schedule an appointment with your counselor on a support service provider.

<https://sites.google.com/clintonpublic.net/cpsmentalhealth/home>

Community Health Center

In addition to our own counseling department, our partnership with Community Health Center (CHC) offers options for families who may need support. The message below is from the CHC for families:

With today's announcement from Governor Lamont regarding school closings for the remainder of the academic year, Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) and School-Based Health Care (SBHC) staff are aware this decision will likely increase the need for students to have access to behavioral health services. Many factors, including social isolation, virtual learning, lack of sports & other activities, loss of high school milestones such as prom and graduation and, for some, a difficult home life, can be quite a burden for young minds while the world attempts to navigate through this new reality. I am reaching out today to assure you that SBHC staff are here and ready to help! With our easy-to-use, safe and secure telehealth platform, SBHC behavioral health specialists are able to provide the same high quality care for students in their own homes with a flexible schedule no longer constrained by on-site school hours. We are currently accepting new patients. Interested families can enroll online by visiting SBHC1.com.

A Message from the Department of Children and Families

DCF has asked us to help spread the word about the state's new "Talk It Out Line", which is a Department of Children and Families' initiative created to provide support and services to help parents and caretakers with the stress and increased needs resulting from caring for their children during the COVID-19 crisis. Parents and caregivers are invited to call 833-258-5011 and/or visit www.talkitoutct.com to speak with trained professionals (in both English and Spanish) who will listen and discuss their concerns and, if additional help is needed, refer them to responsive services. The "Talk It Out Line" is available Monday-Friday from 8am to 8pm; and on weekends from 1 pm to 8 pm.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND LINKS

[Governor's full Press Release on May 5, 2020 regarding extending in-school closure](#)

[Letter from Commissioner of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona: A New Era in Educational Access and Advocacy](#)