

March 26, 2020

Dear Walpole Public Schools Community:

As you may already be aware from Governor Baker's latest press conference, schools in Massachusetts will be closed until May 4th. This will create many challenges for our district, but I am confident we will work together to meet the needs of our students. This situation remains fluid, and we will wait for further guidance from the Department of Education and Secondary Education (DESE) and our local government before sharing any communication on how this latest news impacts our plans. In the meantime, students and families should continue to work with classroom teachers for continuity of learning.

As we anticipated, having academic expectations without the traditional routines of school can feel overwhelming. We are all learning how to navigate this new way of schooling together, and I thank you for working with us. At all levels, we are utilizing the feedback from students, parents, and our staff to make adjustments and ensure we are meeting the needs of our students. It has been wonderful to hear students reconnecting with their teachers and classmates over the last week. We hope that this connection provides reassurance and an important bridge back to the school community. I am extremely appreciative of the efforts of our educators and Leadership Team as they transition into this new approach of learning.

While we have been working to communicate academic expectations and resources, it is equally important that students have social-emotional support during this school closure. Our counselors have been sharing social-emotional resources with families. One that I found helpful as a parent is from [CASEL](#) (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning). In addition, our counselors have been virtually meeting with some students or connecting over the phone when appropriate. As always, please do not hesitate to contact your school principal if your child needs to connect with the school counselor.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Center for Instructional Support have assembled a [list of resources](#), and DESE is working with public broadcaster WGBH and its partner station WGBY to provide other resources. These stations also have a newly created online [distance learning center](#). In addition to existing programming, WGBH plans to expand its educational broadcasting from noon to 5:00 p.m. weekdays on the WORLD Channel. The WORLD Channel is a 24/7 WGBH channel that offers news and documentaries and is now shifting some of its programming to meet this urgent need. More information on the WORLD Channel on [WGBH](#) and [WGBY](#) is available online.

Our food distribution to families in need continues. Last weekend approximately 3,500 pounds of dry goods and 3,500 pounds of fresh produce, frozen meats and fish were delivered, providing enough food for these families for the next two weeks. These efforts will continue in the weeks ahead. We are also assisting in storing the Council on Aging's perishable foods at the Walpole High School so they can be packaged and distributed for our Senior Citizens. I would like to thank Maria Hall, our Food Services Director, for her efforts.

As of today, I learned from the Walpole Department of Public Health that the town has confirmed 12 cases of COVID-19. As testing becomes more widely available, it is expected that additional cases will be confirmed. Please heed the advice of the expert professionals to practice physical distancing as we all need to do our part to curtail the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

March 26, 2020

Page 2

I will continue to send weekly emails to share updates. I know there have been many questions about MCAS, April Break, and the length of this school closure. As I noted earlier, some of those questions were answered with the most recent announcement. As there are more updates and changes, I will communicate with you in a timely manner. I am committed to working with you as a united team to support our children during this difficult time. Thank you again for your continued support.

Stay safe and healthy,

Bridget A. Gough, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools