

April 1, 2020

Dear Parents/ Guardians of Norfolk Public School Students,

I hope you and your children remain safe and healthy as we approach the end of the third week of our school closure. I am sure that children miss being with their friends, teachers and classmates as much as we miss having them in school. It has been a major adjustment for all of us and we know that many families are dealing with unexpected challenges including health concerns, employment changes and managing the emotional and psychological impact of an extended period of physical distancing. Our thoughts and best wishes are with all of you as you work to establish new routines and a new sense of normal for your family. Please note that we are continuing to post resources for parents and students on our Covid 19 site at <https://sites.google.com/norfolk.k12.ma.us/npsdigitalesources/covid-19-updates>. On our site you will find a guide for parents on how to talk to children about Covid 19, as well as a resource for helping families cope with Covid 19. We will continue to update and add resources and information to this page throughout the closure.

Some things you should be aware of for the coming week:

**Consent to Participate in Online Learning/ Direct Instruction:**

Tomorrow the district will be sending out a letter to families regarding our policies and requirements for students to participate in online learning with their teachers and classmates. These letters will be sent through ConnectEd and also through the U.S Mail. Please read the consent form carefully for the protection of both students and staff. You do not need to sign and return the letter. Students participation in virtual classes and online learning will be considered consent. Audio or video recording of any online teaching and instruction provided by the Norfolk Public Schools is against the law.

**Incorporation of Virtual Teaching/ Direct Instruction:**

As mentioned in my last communication, the Massachusetts Department of Education has issued new guidelines for Districts with regard to remote learning plans. During the first two weeks of school closure, the activities and resources provided were optional and were for enrichment purposes. Beginning next week, these activities are no longer optional. All students are expected to participate in remote learning instruction. If you do not want your child to participate in virtual learning, you must call my office at 508-528-1225 and we will work to establish an alternate learning plan for your child.

**Expectations for Remote Learning:**

As per the Department of Education's recommendations, the Norfolk Public Schools will continue to provide a minimum of 3 ½ hours of academic content daily. This content consists of a range of activities from independent reading, to journal writing, to math fact fluency practice and math games, as well as many other projects and learning experiences in the arts, physical

education and music. New guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Education also recommends that students have multiple opportunities to connect with one or more educators during the week. Our teachers have been anxious to work with their students directly and have worked hard to develop and learn new technology tools in order to effectively provide remote instruction. Beginning next week teachers will be incorporating virtual teaching in both English Language Arts and Mathematics on a weekly basis. The structure and schedule will look different at each grade level based on the developmental needs of our students.

**Schedule:**

Each grade level has a scheduled time for ELA and for Math teaching in order to prevent overlap for families whose children may be sharing technology tools. General schedule information will be posted on the weekly grade level academic calendars. Teachers will also be communicating directly with their classes the times and schedule for virtual learning. Kindergarten teachers will be providing direct instruction to students twice a week in small groups (2-3) students. Teachers in grades 2-5 will be providing three virtual lessons a week in ELA and three virtual lessons a week in mathematics. Our sixth grade teachers will provide two longer lessons per week in each ELA and Mathematics and will also host virtual office hours to provide individual instruction and support to students. Details about times and how to log in will be sent shortly.

**Special Education:**

The Massachusetts Department of Education and the Federal Government have also issued new guidance for the provision of services to students receiving instruction and support through special education. This new guidance was issued last Friday in response to the anticipated extended period of closure. We continue to be committed to providing quality instruction and resources to students that meet their individualized needs. Our Special Education Director has been working tirelessly with teachers and staff to develop a plan for providing specialized instruction to our students through remote learning tools. Parents of students receiving services through our special education department will receive additional information from Dr. Tupper tomorrow about how the district will be providing services to students based on their individualized needs.

I would like to close by extending a heartfelt thank you to all of the Norfolk Public Schools teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, secretarial staff, nurses, facilities and technology teams, food service professionals, Human Resource and Business Office staff. All of these individuals have worked countless hours to plan for and support our transition to a remote learning platform. In addition, they have volunteered time to support the community through meal distribution, assisting the public health department, donating and providing cleaning and personal protective equipment and reaching out to children and families to provide students with a sense of connection and continuity. I feel truly fortunate to work with such an outstanding team of educators and staff members.

Additionally, we want to extend our appreciation and gratitude to our parents and families who have been supportive and patient as we work to transform teaching and learning in response to this unprecedented situation. We have greatly appreciated the positive response to the online learning tools and resources we have provided. If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to contact me through email or by calling the office.

Take care and stay safe,

Sincerely,

Dr. Ingrid N. Allardi