

Darien Public Schools - Administrative Offices

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March 16, 2020

Dear Families,

At the Emergency Board of Education Meeting this evening, the Board approved the administration's request to submit a Waiver Application to the Connecticut State Department of Education. If you were watching this evening, perhaps you noticed that we received word during the meeting that the CT State Department of Education is now planning to reduce the reporting requirements and is considering eliminating individual district applications for 180-day waivers. Things seem to change daily in this public health crisis.

Regardless, Darien's application has been submitted tonight. Obtaining a waiver will allow eLearning to be used in lieu of adding days of instruction through the end of June. In anticipation of the approval of the waiver in the next day or so, here are our expected next steps:

- ❑ Tuesday, March 17, 2020: Students are highly encouraged to engage in the eLearning activities available on the www.darienps.org website and Google Classroom where applicable;
- ❑ Wednesday, March 18, 2020 through March 20, 2020: Students will be **required** to complete the daily activities that are currently posted on the eLearning site and/or offered through Google Classroom. These activities may be completed at a student's own pace. Teachers will be available to answer questions during school hours; and,
- ❑ Monday, March 23, 2020 until further notice: Students will be **required** to complete the daily activities that will be available through Google Classroom. Attendance will be taken daily. Parents should notify their child's teacher or school if they are unable to attend or complete the assigned work. Teachers will be available to answer questions during school hours.

Over the next few days, our dedicated faculty will transition from the current enrichment *eLearning model* to an *eLearning model* that includes new learning, monitoring for student engagement, and some real-time communication with teachers. While recognizing that any type of eLearning model cannot perfectly replicate a typical school day experience, this model will provide our students with daily structure, with continued participation in their school learning communities, and with ongoing access to meaningful teaching and learning. As we are in uncharted waters, we appreciate your patience and support as we enter this new adventure in learning.

In the coming days, you will receive a communication from your child's school describing the schedule and expectations for each level. We ask that as you plan for a required eLearning experience, you consider the following ways to help your child be successful:

- ❑ Designate a quiet space to focus and work, grades 3-12. Adults may need to be accessible for students in grades PK-2. Parents of younger children may initially need to help with technology;
- ❑ If possible, print a copy of your student's daily schedule;
- ❑ Provide earphones/headset;
- ❑ Encourage breaks and movement opportunities throughout the day;
- ❑ Establish and help maintain a daily routine; and,
- ❑ Communicate with your teacher as needed.

I am certain that you will have questions as we begin to implement this new eLearning plan. Please do not hesitate to contact your building administrators or department chairs with any questions or concerns so that we are able to work together to implement this new type of learning. Again, thank you for your patience and understanding during these challenging times. We will miss your children during this period of closure but will do everything possible to stay closely connected. Stay healthy and be safe.

Sincerely,

Alan Addley, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools