



March 26, 2020

Dear BPS Community,

Following the Governor's announcement that schools will remain closed and not re-open before May 4, 2020, I am writing to provide additional information on the BPS learning plan, based upon the Commissioner of Education's recommendations for remote learning, released at 12:45pm today.

Earlier this week, I emailed a letter to the BPS community outlining our BPS learning plan. In summary, our plan provides a phased in approach. The **first phase** of our plan includes access to technology and enrichment resources. As a result, during our first phase of remote learning, **students and families can expect the following:**

- **Chromebooks** are available to all students, K-12. If you do not have a device at home, and are not part of the curbside pick-up at your school this week, please contact your building principal to arrange for a BPS Chromebook.
- **Enrichment activities**, to support student learning, are available on our website <https://www.barnstable.k12.ma.us/er>
- Our website provides access to rich and engaging learning opportunities that have been vetted and/or developed by BPS educators. We encourage students and families to access these resources daily.
- BPS educators are notifying parents/guardians and, depending on the grade level, students of specific **"office hours"** that will begin on March 30, 2020. Office hours are for the purpose of providing support, and answering questions, pertaining to the resources found at the above link. All educators, including school counselors, school psychologists, social workers, and school nurses will be available for two hours per day, Monday through Friday. **Parents and students are encouraged to contact their teachers and/or student support professionals during these office hours.** Please also contact your building principal via email as needed.

The **next phase of our remote learning plan** is designed to increase direct educator contact with students. This phase is also now informed by the guidance we received today from the Commissioner of Education. The guidance (available on our website) is in response to the extended school closure as announced by Governor Baker. It is important to note that the guidance applies to public, K-12, school districts. We are aware that private, parochial, and institutions of higher education may have different options, particularly as those options apply to distance or virtual learning.



There are key points in the Commissioner's guidance that I have highlighted below.

- Districts and schools must continue to focus on the **holistic needs** of the educational community. The safety and well-being of students, families, and staff has been and must continue to be our top priority as an educational community.
- Nothing can replace the in-person schooling experience, and **we should not expect that remote learning can replicate the traditional school day.**
- **Remote learning is not synonymous with online learning.** Remote learning can take place in a multitude of ways, including by helping students engage with resources in their everyday lives and in the natural world around them.
- We strongly recommend that districts and **schools focus on reinforcing skills already taught this school year and applying and deepening these skills.** We recognize that in some cases, teachers and students may wish to continue with new material, particularly at the high school level. In these cases, districts should consider equity of access and support for all students.
- We recommend the following routine and structure for remote learning, recognizing the need for flexibility for individual districts and individual students within them: **opportunity to connect** with one or more educators multiple times per week, access to **multiple hours per day of academic content** directed by educators, which should **focus on reinforcing skills already taught this school year** and applying and deepening those skills. Time each day for **physical activity** based on recommendations from educators. **Additional daily time for enrichment activities** such as the arts (dance, media arts, music, theater, visual arts).

We will use the elements highlighted above to work with our educators to finalize the next phase of our BPS learning plan. We anticipate that we will move to the next phase of our learning plan during the second week of April. Meanwhile, we strongly encourage all students to contact their teachers during posted office hours so that learning may continue through the use of our posted enrichment opportunities.

In terms of supporting the needs of our students with disabilities, please know that since our closure the district's **Directors of Special Education** have joined other directors on two conference calls with officials from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and will participate on another call today. We anticipate receiving additional guidance and clarification regarding meeting the needs of students with disabilities and will communicate the guidance as soon as it is available to us. We greatly appreciate your patience as we determine how to best support the needs of students with disabilities.

I would also like to take this opportunity to share that through the extended school closure **we will**



**continue, and expand, our school meals** for anyone under the age of 21, regardless of town of residence or school attended. Please check our website for locations and hours. And, please help us spread the word about this important service.

Finally, I want to thank our BPS community for all of your efforts in keeping our community as healthy and as resilient as possible. We know that our students want to be with one another, and as the weather warms it will be unusual not to gather in friend groups. Our medical community continues to stress the critical importance of physical distancing, along with other important precautionary measures. As educators we will work to provide wellness activities for our students that align with these principles, so that we can support the extraordinary efforts of our healthcare workers.

Be well,

Dr. Meg Mayo-Brown, Superintendent of Schools