

March 30

Dear NEC Families;

I hope that you are all staying healthy and are doing OK at this stressful time.

As you know, schools across MA are now closed through the end of April, with the earliest return date being May 4<sup>th</sup>. Given this extended closure, the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has issued new guidance for schools and for special education.

Our focus for the first two weeks was on providing you with information and support. Our staff is now working on providing you with more individualized learning plans for each student so that we can follow DESE's guidance to provide students with FAPE (a free and appropriate public education) while protecting the health and safety of students, families, educators and service providers.

Our priority remains health, safety and connection, but we will now increase our focus on learning and skill development.

Over the past two weeks our staff has worked to stay in touch with you, give you access to resources, and make sure that all families are safe and able to meet basic needs.

By April 6<sup>th</sup>, each of you will receive an Individualized Learning Plan for your child, with a range of ideas about how you can support learning during this period. Our teachers and specialists are working hard to use a variety of on-line tools such as Classroom Dojo, Google Classroom, and Zoom so that they can do "live" lessons for their students, conduct individual learning sessions or check-ins, or post videos and recommended resources.

Remote learning is new for all of us, so please be patient as we learn. There are also some worries about confidentiality, so please read the following expectations:

- *NEC special education staff will be connecting with you as family and students to provide special education services remotely.*
- *To the extent that this distance learning activity provides confidential student information, all participants agree, by participating in this distance learning activity, to refrain from disseminating any confidential student information about other student participants with any third parties. By participating in this distance learning experience, consent to this request is hereby provided.*
- *It is expected that online interactions as ZOOM or Google Meet live instruction will not be videoed as this risks confidentiality as stated above. In addition, students are expected to follow all the guidelines in our safe technology usage policy.*

The instruction that we are providing will not be equal to what our special education staff provide during our school day. IEP's will be a guiding document to provide these services but were not written considering an online platform. Special Education staff are learning as we go in changing our entire instructional model to meet the needs of our students. There will be a learning curve

and we will get better as we move along. Our special education team is a dedicated group of educators and they are ready to take this challenge on as a team. We appreciate your support as we move forward together.

Again, please feel free to call me or any member of your child's team if you are in need of further assistance or support. Also, now that we will be moving to additional on-line learning, please let us know if your student will need to borrow a chromebook.

Be well,

Fran Rosenberg