

Message from Thomas W. Giard III, Superintendent of Schools

Dear Waterford Public Schools Students and Families:

Firstly, it is my hope that everyone is remaining safe and following the guidance and recommendations to remain healthy. It is important we all heed the advice of the health experts regarding social distancing and other best practices.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) released updated information and is now encouraging school districts to shift fully to a distance learning environment in anticipation of a prolonged district closure extending beyond March 31, 2020. Waterford Public Schools will be moving to a distance learning environment next week.

Teachers have begun preparing and planning for distance learning opportunities and we will launch this new phase of learning on Friday, March 27, 2020. In the meantime, students are encouraged to continue to access the supplemental materials that have been provided.

These supplemental learning resources are still available on teacher webpages as well as the previously designated pick-up times at CLMS on Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays between 9AM-11AM.

Beginning Friday, March 27, teachers will be reaching out to students, establishing times and schedules and expectations, and begin distribution of distance learning tasks. In large measure, these distance learning tasks will involve a significant amount of independent work, but will also include regular contact with teachers that will take place primarily through email, the Google Classroom platform or SeeSaw at the younger grades. We will be providing information to help you and your student access these platforms.

It will not be perfect nor will it be our final version of distance learning. It will continue to evolve and be enhanced over time. Education Commissioner Cardona is strongly urging districts to launch as soon as practicable even if it's not exactly what a district envisions as its final model. We have a plan to fully support you in an on-going manner as we implement a distance learning environment.

We know a distance learning environment is heavily reliant on access to a device and internet at home for our students and families. We started issuing devices to households this week and we have been sharing information on affordable internet options to our families as outlined in previous emails. We will continue to make you aware of these opportunities moving forward.

We have iPads available for students in grades PK-1 for families who do not have a device at home. iPads may be picked up at CLMS on Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays between 9AM-11AM. You do not specifically need an iPad for grades PK-1 as any tablet, Chromebook, desktop, or laptop will also work. Chromebooks for students in grades 2-12 may be picked up at CLMS on Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays between 9AM-11AM. Again, a Chromebook is not required if you have a comparable device already at home.

As I have said, public health conditions are changing rapidly and the state's response to those conditions also change rapidly. The guidance that we continue to receive from the State of Connecticut, from the CT State Department of Education, and from local health authorities continue to guide our decisions.

As the situation continues to evolve, please look for updated information related to school calendars and future decisions.

Thank you for your patience and your continued support. We will continue to work together and support your children in the best ways we can. Be well.

My best,

Tom

Thomas W. Giard III

Superintendent

Waterford Public Schools