

Michael Kascak (SWS)

Sun, Mar 29, 4:29 PM

(8 days ago)

to hillside, me,

Diane, Daniel

First and foremost, I trust everyone in your household is doing their best to stay safe. Staying physically and emotionally healthy is, and should be, the number one priority for us all during the incredibly unsettling time. This communication serves as a direct follow-up, (and when appropriate, reiteration) of some of the most important points in the email the Superintendent sent out last night. I encourage you to reread that email in light of what I am sharing in this one.

I would like to address the three priorities Dan outlined in order. The first one, *Maintain and nurture strong connections and relationships with students and families*, is our primary focus as we move forward. To that end, teachers will be ensuring that they are connected with every one of our students. All students should have an established connection with their homeroom teacher. Some families may also be connecting with Special Educators, counselors, and METCO and ELL staff. These connections will be crucial as we move forward during these uncertain times. If you have not received any communication from your child's teacher, please email me directly.

The second and third priorities, *Prepare and implement for remote learning to advance the curriculum in thoughtful and measured ways so all students can learn and grow; and Provide services and supports to help meet the many needs of all students, particularly our most vulnerable students* are still very much works in progress and are what we will continue to address in the coming weeks. As Dan mentioned, this is a challenge our entire staff is up for, but also one we have never had to address before so there will likely be glitches along the way. Still, here is the timeline you can expect.

Next week will look similar to last. Teachers will continue to send out daily messages and opportunities for asynchronous interactions between students and teachers are likely to increase. Teachers will also be sharing more activities which do not require students have online access in order to offer a balance between active and passive learning. These daily messages will also be archived on our school's homepage under a link which will read "Daily Messages from Teachers during School Closure" and will be found below this [link](#) which houses communications from me. The teachers and I have started work on developing methods of remote instruction and will also spend this week creating a schedule to deliver new curriculum and protocols for review and skills practice. Concurrently, teachers and staff will be participating in both curriculum and professional development meetings with their colleagues online.

Beginning April 6th, age-appropriate implementation of these methods of new curriculum instruction will start and opportunities for synchronous interaction with teachers will increase. Knowing that this is a new process for everyone, regular review of the balance of both computer and non-computer activities, as well as synchronous and asynchronous interactions, will occur as will gauging the impact of remote learning on all three of our constituencies, (teachers, students and you!). I've heard from a number of families that remote learning happens in very different ways in your households. Some families are feeling very stressed about not being able to attend to all the activities while other families are voicing frustration around not getting enough to do with their children. Teachers feel the same. Some want to tread carefully while others want to do even more than what has been offered. We, as adults, need to support ourselves and each other for our students well-being. With that in mind, please feel free to reach out to me or your child's teacher with questions as they arise.

Two logistic items. One, Lori Donovan will be resuming our online newsletter starting this Friday. Please read that when it goes out as this will be the place to access information regularly sent to you this time of year. (For example, information about class placement and protocol for requests will be found in this Friday's newsletter). And two, because the crisis we are experiencing is first and foremost a health crisis, our school nurse Debbie Greiff will be sending a weekly message via our newsletter every Friday. The first edition of this is attached below.

Circling back to the opening paragraph, I'd like to end this email reflecting on the need for communal optimism for the sake of our students as well as ourselves. I personally want to thank you all for everything you're doing at home to support your children's learning. I know it's a tall order. I also really appreciate the gratitude many of you have shared with me both directly or through the PTC presidents, Vanessa Jones and April Crawford, who I will continue to meet with regularly and virtually. They, like many of you, have been a great support to the Sunita Williams staff and me! My virtual hug to each of you can be found in watching this [video](#) and I'll be happy to back it up with an actual hug when we can all be together in person.

My best to you all,

Mr. K

Michael Kascak, Principal

Sunita Williams Elementary School

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