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April 9, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This week, each school sent out a parent survey to check in with our families. We hope that you will take a few minutes and let us know how you are faring. We know that the present circumstances present many challenges for all of our families. We're anxious to get your feedback and your ideas about how we can help.

### School Closure

- **Per today's announcement by the Governor and the Commissioner of Education, Berlin Schools will remain closed until May 20th.**
- As the weather gets nicer, please note that the social distancing guidelines preclude having students gather or participate in any sports on school grounds. The town of Berlin has closed all fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, and school playgrounds. Our security guards will be patrolling schools and school grounds to limit these social gatherings.
- In order to support the Governor's order to #StaySafe, #StayHome, school offices and the Board of Education office will not be open for regular hours at this time. Please call ahead and make an appointment.
- School nurses are available to support families. Their contact information is available on the district COVID-19 page. [https://www.berlinschools.org/news\\_events/coronavirus\\_covid-19\\_information](https://www.berlinschools.org/news_events/coronavirus_covid-19_information)

### Breakfast and Lunch Distribution

- To ensure that every child in Berlin has access to breakfast and lunch daily, we will provide food three days a week for pick-up at Willard Elementary School. The schedule will be every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
- **Food distribution will continue as scheduled during the April vacation week, April 13-17.**
- Any Berlin family with a child (under the age of 18) is eligible to receive meals. Each child will receive two breakfasts and two lunches at the designated pick-up times until school resumes.

### Distance/At Home Learning

- We know that your lives at home have been upended in many ways. We hope that you are supporting your children in their learning at home, but please also know that we are not expecting you to replace our teachers! In school, our schedules permit students to move from class to class, or activity to activity, and to interact with friends and other students throughout the day. It may be hard for your child to stay on task for extended periods of time. We encourage you to make sure that you take breaks and help break out larger tasks into manageable chunks.
- The emotional health of our students and families is always important, but never more than in difficult times. Please don't let school work be an additional stressor. If it seems like too much (for you or for your child), take a break and try again later, or on another day.
- As a way of connecting (virtually) face-to-face with students, teachers have been using a number of online platforms, including Google Meets and Zoom. We are aware of the issues that have arisen across the nation with similar platforms. Teachers have been made aware of best practices for

holding meetings with students, including how to adjust security settings, enabling waiting rooms, using passwords, and so on. Please let us know if any issues arise that we should be aware of.

- Some lessons will be recorded so that they may be viewed at a later time. Please be sure that your children know that lessons and meetings may be recorded.
- During April vacation, administrators will continue to examine ways to support students through additional live instruction.
- As an extra level of protection, we have implemented off-site filtering on school devices that is comparable to the level of filtering when devices are used on our school networks.
- Our technology staff has been working to communicate with families to make devices available to students and to help families gain access to the internet. Please see this [link](#) for a complete list of options. If you are in need of a device, please click on this [link](#) and complete the form.

#### **Updates Regarding State and AP Testing:**

- The College Board has announced that all Connecticut colleges and universities will accept scores from online AP Testing, which will take place on an assigned date between May 4 and May 15.

#### **Budget Update:**

- On Tuesday night, the budget was approved by the Berlin Town Council. The education budget will increase school funding by 3.2%, allowing us to maintain current staffing levels and add several positions that are critical to improving services and increasing opportunities for our students. We are grateful to the community for their support of education and their commitment to our students.

#### **School Calendar:**

- A reminder that during April vacation week, teachers will be off and will not be posting new assignments.
- The last student day will be Wednesday, June 17.
- At this time, we are still planning to hold graduation as scheduled on Sunday, June 21.
- There are many scheduled events still pending on the school calendars. We will let you know as soon as we can if we are able to hold events and maintain a safe environment for our students, families and staff.

Thank you all for your cooperation and understanding during this challenging period. I will continue to provide updates as events unfold. The principals and I will continue to monitor email to answer questions as we are able to do so.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Benigni  
Superintendent of Schools

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