



March 20, 2020

Dear LEARN Employees,

I hope this message finds you and your family healthy in this time of illness.

As I said in a message earlier this week, communications will be sent each Friday and more often as needed. Here is our first Friday update.

This afternoon Ryan Donlon and Bridgette Gordon-Hickey will be sharing Phase 2 of LEARN's interim alternative learning plan.

General Information

Since my Monday message, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to change by the hour. The federal government is now beginning to respond to the depth of the situation. The State of Connecticut continues its efforts to contain the coronavirus and do as much for the State's students as possible.

As you may have heard in the news, the State has said that schools will finish their year on **their original schedules**. This will be true even if the 180-day learning requirement has not been met.

The State has given the regional educational service centers an important role in helping provide interim alternative learning opportunities, during the time that students must stay at home. We have a great deal of work ahead.

Employment

In this update, I am being as clear about our employment situation as I can be, at this point in time. Please remember - this pandemic situation continues to change each day.

Who is working and who is furloughed.

All staff must remain off site unless access is arranged and approved by your supervisor.

While offsite, some employees will be asked to perform remote work. This staff will continue to be paid at the same level and with the same benefits as they were prior to the State school closure. This staff is as follows:

- All certified staff,
- All salaried staff
- All 12-month employees, and
- All Certified Occupational Therapist Assistants.

If you fall into one of these categories, we will expect you to be working per assignment(s) by your supervisor. You should expect that you may be assigned remote work by your school principal or supervising administrator.



If you are not part of one of these categories, I'm afraid that we must place you on leave, or what we call "furlough." Being furloughed means that you remain an employee, but are not currently working.

Technically, your furlough started immediately upon the LEARN closure, which was Friday, March 13, 2020. Practically, the furlough will continue with pay through March 27, 2020.

Pay and Benefits for Furloughed Employees.

If you are a furloughed employee, LEARN is committed to paying you wages for your regularly scheduled hours for the first 10 workdays of LEARN's closure. This means that you will be paid through the next pay period, which ends on March 27, 2020. Beyond that time, we are uncertain what will take place. We will update you as we learn.

This means you will receive a paycheck this week for your work through March 13, 2020.

This also means you will receive a paycheck in the week of April 3, 2020, which is for the furlough time through March 27, 2020.

If you are a furloughed employee, you will be covered under LEARN's health insurance plan for March and April. We will provide you more information about insurance in the coming weeks.

Emergency/Necessary Leave and/or Family Sick Leave for Furloughed Employees.

As we said above, LEARN will provide pay for regularly scheduled hours for the first 10 days of your furlough, which is through March 27, 2020. After that date, LEARN will automatically apply your emergency/necessary and/or family sick leave benefits. You do not need to fill in any paperwork for this to apply.

Unemployment Compensation.

We strongly encourage all furloughed employees to apply for unemployment benefits. You will not be eligible to receive benefits until LEARN can no longer pay you but the sooner you have your application on file, the sooner you will receive your benefits.

You can apply for benefits on the Connecticut Department of Labor website at <http://www.filectui.com/>.

In order to fill out the application, there are several pieces of information you will need from LEARN.

- First, the Department of Labor may ask you for the employer registration number. The number is **00-011-31**.
- Second, the Department of Labor will want to verify that you are not working and not being paid. You may forward the DOL to our **Director of Human Resources, Nat Brown at nbrown@learn.k12.ct.us**.
- Finally, the Department of Labor may ask if you were provided with a furlough package. The answer is no. As a result of the unexpected and immediate demand by the State to close LEARN, we were unable to provide these packages to you at the time we closed. We are in the process of preparing those, although we need some



additional information from the State before we complete the process. You should be able to apply without the package.

Sick Leave

Finally, all staff – working and furloughed – should report if you become ill during LEARN's closure. You may do so by sending an email with the dates of your illness to our Director of Human Resources, Nat Brown, at nbrown@learn.k12.ct.us. The HR department will work with the Payroll Department to credit your leave appropriately. If needed, an HR staff member may contact you to provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Kate Ericson
Executive Director