



March 18, 2020

Dearest LEARN Community,

Across the country, families are confronted with new challenges and coping with the stress of the unknown. Yet, stories of compassion and empathy fill us with optimism and the belief that we will continue to move forward, together.

Behind the scenes at LEARN, we are working hard to provide you with accurate and timely answers to the questions and changing realities that we know are contributing to your stress and unease. We will continue to communicate as we navigate this situation together.

To that end, we wish to share a few reminders and updates with you today:

LEARN Hotline: We have established a phone number and hotline that are monitored daily in order to respond to your questions and concerns. We will work to return your communication as soon as possible. Please send your inquiries to info@learn.k12.ct.us or leave a message at (860) 434-4800.

Requirement Waivers: Governor Lamont has issued a waiver that relaxes many of the legal requirements placed on schools and districts – including the requirement for 180 days of school. While initial guidance suggested we would remain in school until June 30th, we now anticipate ending our school year on our original end date prior to closure. This date varies by school based on snow days.

Interim Alternative Educational Opportunities: Guidance related to interim alternative educational opportunities has vacillated since the possibility of school closures began. Now that extended closures are increasingly likely, districts throughout Connecticut are considering ways to enhance learning opportunities and interpersonal connections for our students at home. Central to those decisions must be a recognition that all students deserve equal access to educational opportunities regardless of disability or lack of access to technology. In addition, school closures have left many families scrambling to provide childcare or cope with sudden unemployment. Our plan is to continue to provide families with resources while not adding to these stressors.

LEARN's Plan for Families: Prior to closure, a regional team of educators assembled to build a library of resources for the eventuality of school closures. These resources are on the LEARN website and have been shared with families. These resources are optional interim educational opportunities that families can use for at least two weeks to keep children thinking and learning. We have also provided some hard copies already and will be mailing more this week. Beyond this two-week period, we will be engaging with your union leadership to discuss a plan to engage our staff in providing meaningful interim learning activities and supports. Perhaps more importantly, we will seek to maintain connections between educators and our children. This longer-term plan will include sharing general activities and opportunities as well as curricula-specific resources and support while remaining sensitive to family needs for both our students and staff. More specific information will be coming very soon.

LEARN's Plan for Staff: In addition to caring for our students, we know that you are also caring for your own families. We are finalizing clarification regarding pay, insurance, and work expectations which we will share out this Friday.



We appreciate everyone's flexibility and support of one another. While we cannot be certain what the coming days will hold for us all, we can be confident in the strength of this LEARN community to respond to whatever challenges may come.

Be safe, take care of each other, and call on us if we can be of support to you.

Sincerely,

Kate Ericson
Executive Director