

Dr. Darrell J. Lockwood
Superintendent

CHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT, SAU #82
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Sheryl Rich
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April 3, 2020

RE: Letter #11 – Cancellation of April Vacation, Changes to Remote Learning Structure, Grading, Food Service and More

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As we continue in our Remote Learning process, we are reviewing its implementation and establishing some routines and practices. Thank you for your input on the Remote Learning Survey. Your comments have assisted us in developing the adjustments we are announcing today to our approach. We are tweaking our expectations and our schedules to be certain that Remote Learning works for the instructional and emotional needs of our students, sets reasonable demands on our faculty and staff, and acknowledges the stress placed on parents and guardians.

First, let me say that after much consideration we have decided to cancel the April Vacation. We will continue to work on Remote Learning through the last week in April. We believe and the Remote Learning survey results reinforce that to some extent we have reached our stride with Remote Learning. With the adjustments we are announcing to our schedules today that address what we learned in the survey, we believe that the decision to cancel is the right decision. Additionally, we think that you will agree that there are few if any opportunities to go anywhere on "vacation" anyway. That said, we know that some of you might need a break. With that in mind, we are waiving any late assignment penalties for youngsters. So, if you and your family need a break, take one. When you come back "online" we will be here and we will review the work your child submits without consequence. Our school district has moved toward being standards based, not seat time based.

We will work with the NH Department of Education and submit our calendar changes. In a future letter, I will update you on the new anticipated last day of school for students.

Beginning next week, and for the duration of Remote Learning period, Chester Academy will designate every Wednesday as an Independent Learning Day. Students are being asked to spend each Wednesday working on assignments that they have not yet completed, or on an Independent Learning Day Project. Teachers and staff members will spend each Wednesday working on the essential behind-the-scenes aspects of Remote Learning. As they will be involved in developing lessons, creating online materials and receiving training, teachers will not be available to students and parents on that day. The exception to this will be that paraeducators will be working with some of our special needs students on each Wednesday.

By Monday, April 6th, each student's classroom (elementary) or advisory (middle) will have the following explanatory information posted in their Google Classroom: video directions; written directions; a list of project ideas; and the link to a log form - where students will document their Wednesday independent learning day activities whether they be completion of previously assigned work or new independent learning. It is our hope that students will work with their families to choose projects and activities that are meaningful to them and that fit into each family's unique needs and circumstances during these unusual times.

We anticipate doing another Remote Learning survey in the next couple of weeks to check-in on these adjustments. Your input will again be important for us to hear.

The question of how to equitably “grade” student work during this Remote Learning period has been discussed at length within our district and throughout the state. Elementary level teachers and Integrated Arts teachers in Chester will continue to assess the standards associated within the content areas and grade levels. If insufficient data is collected, a standard will be left blank when reported in PowerSchool. Teachers in grades six through eight have been entering “Missing” when an assignment is not completed. Beginning Monday, April 6, “Missing” assignments will be entered as a zero. This will give students and parents a more accurate portrayal of where the child is at. As stated earlier in this correspondence, there is no penalty for students turning in late work. The final grade in grades six through eight grade core classes will be Pass or Fail dependent upon the final number grade.

As you know, Chester Academy is closed with the exception of authorized personnel. Unfortunately, we have also had to close the Playground Equipment and Outdoor Basketball Court areas as we cannot clean these areas daily. We apologize for this inconvenience.

Even while the building is closed to the public, the kitchen is still up and running serving curbside pickup for breakfast and lunch grab-n-go meals for all students. An electronic form has been created for parents to pre-order meals and should be filled out for each student. Meals need to be pre-ordered by 5 PM on Sunday of each week. Pickup times are Monday (meals for 2 days) and Wednesday (meals for 3 days) between 10:00 AM - Noon. Please access the electronic order form [here](#). This link as well as additional information is available on the Chester Academy website.

We are here to make sure that students have access to healthy, nutritious meals. Please contact Leanne Sullivan at sullivanl@chesteracademy.org or 887-3621x183 if other arrangements need to be made for pickup or delivery of meals or questions about the NSLP.

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is available to assist families that may find themselves faced with changes to their income. If your family’s employment situation has changed, I would encourage you to investigate your eligibility for this program. An application and instructions have been included with this letter. They can also be located under Food Service on the Chester Academy website. Once completed, applications can be emailed to sullivanl@chesteracademy.org or dropped off during meal pickup times that are stated above.

Sorry that this letter is so long. We are trying to limit the number of items we send to you and therefore some of our notes get lengthy. We will continue to send you weekly updates. However, if you have questions or concerns please send me an email at lockwoodd@chesteracademy.org. We will do our best to provide you with a prompt response.

Enjoy the weekend with your families! We hope that you are well! Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Darrell J. Lockwood

Darrell J. Lockwood, Ed.D.