



School Closure Update 3.25.20

ABRSD Families,

As you have likely heard, Governor Baker has ordered that the school closure be extended to May 4. For me, this news brought with it a new level of personal and professional frustration and sadness. I am sure that you and many of our students share these feelings.

When we closed our doors on March 12, we were one of the first communities in Massachusetts to do so. Since that time, we have seen the closure extended state-wide until April 6 and now again until May 4. Unfortunately, we do not know what the next 4 weeks will bring with regard to how the pandemic progresses and need to consider the possibility that the closure could extend beyond this date.

Our original educational plan was designed for a closure of 1-2 weeks. However, the latest information indicates that this will now be extended beyond what was originally anticipated. As such, we will adapt our approach to educational programming so that we can provide students greater structure and more regular connection with teachers and classmates, prevent significant skill regression, and introduce new content that is important for their continued success. Above all, we will continue to prioritize and expand the social-emotional connections our teachers and students are making and work so that all of our students have access to consistent practices across our classrooms and schools. Over the coming days, we will be working with our educators to discuss and hone our expanded vision of educational services and will provide more information to students and families early next week. Please know that it is not lost on our leadership or educators just how challenging providing educational opportunities in homes is for families. We recognize the enormous emotional toll this takes on everyone and are keeping this at the forefront of our planning.

A particular group that I worry about are our high school seniors, many of whom have been looking forward to their last semester of academics, athletics and activities as they close out their educational careers with us. I want to reassure our seniors and their families that Principal Dorey and I have remained in communication on this issue, and we are both committed to making our seniors' end of the year a memorable one, even if it is not what they had planned or expected. Unfortunately, due to the ever-changing landscape, it is still premature to speculate about plans in May and early June. As of now, we have not changed the dates of commencement or other end-of-year activities. Obviously, as we know more, we may need to adjust plans accordingly based on the conditions as those dates approach. Regardless, we will do everything we can to make sure that our closing events for this senior class are both meaningful and memorable.

I wish I was writing with better news. I want to reassure everyone that our educators and leaders continue to work to connect with students and provide learning opportunities that help them to feel connected to us during this closure.

Sincerely,

Peter Light, Superintendent of Schools