



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road, Acton, MA 01720

www.abschools.org (978) 264-4700

April 21, 2020

ABRSD Families,

You have likely followed the news today that Governor Baker has extended school closures through the remainder of the school year. The news brought with it a range of feelings for me. As an educator, I am saddened at having lost the opportunity to close out the year with our students, and in particular our high school seniors. As an educator and a parent, I am also concerned for the loss of learning that will accompany an extended closure. Yet, despite these feelings, I believe that Governor Baker made the best decision to keep our students, staff and community safe during this unprecedented time. In particular, the lack of available proven measures to bring students back to school safely was a major concern for our educators and leadership team. Without this important guidance and time to prepare, I was becoming increasingly concerned for how we might safely reopen in the near future.

While we learned this information along with you today, our leadership team has been preparing for a variety of possibilities around our school closure, including the possibility we would not return. For the remainder of this school year, we will continue with distance learning plans through our last day of school on June 17. We are committed to learning additional ways to improve our distance education, and we will make improvements as we progress through the coming weeks and we learn more about what works to engage our students. Some noteworthy points:

- Last Friday, we released a basic needs survey to try to identify any individuals in our community who need additional support. When completing the survey, please remember to include your contact information if you want us to follow-up with you.
- This Friday, we will survey students, families, and staff about our distance learning program in an effort to continually improve the experience for everyone. We also anticipate additional guidance from DESE regarding distance learning in the next week or so.
- We have begun planning for end-of-year senior activities to make graduation as memorable as possible. Mr. Dorey will be sending more information along in the near future.
- In the next week or so, watch for information about how your student(s) can pick up belongings from each of our schools. This will require logistical planning and coordination so that we can maintain appropriate physical distancing protocols for everyone's health and safety.

As we look to the future, we are hoping to be able to hold summer programming and provide learning opportunities for students, even if it looks different than it has in past years. While we do not know exactly what programs and learning opportunities will look like, we know that our Extended School Year (ESY) and summer supplemental English Learner program will continue to be incredibly important to us. We are also exploring possibilities of offering new additional summer learning opportunities for students who may have lost considerable ground due to the closure and to offer as many of our regular summer programs through community education as possible. Finally, we will make sure that our schools are ready, both physically and academically to welcome students, families, and staff back this fall. To do this effectively, we will be undertaking significant planning for physical, emotional, and academic structures and supports to help students and staff reacclimate to school.

Since school closures of this nature are unprecedented, there is understandably a high degree of anxiety among the students and adults that make up our school community. I want you to rest assured that our faculty, staff, and administrators will do everything within our power to make sure all of our students are taken care of and supported when we return. We know this time is challenging for everyone, so please know that we take our responsibility to each of your children with extreme seriousness and are committed to taking each student where they are and helping them develop the skills they will need for future success. We may not have all of the answers today, but we will continue to plan, communicate, and connect with you to support each student and family through this closure.

Sincerely,

Peter Light, Superintendent of Schools & the ABRSD Leadership Team