

April 8, 2020

RSU 16 Staff, Families and Community,

RSU 16 will follow the recommendation from the Education Commissioner to anticipate the need to replace classroom instruction with remote learning for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. We met with the Commissioner this morning and the best advice we received was to plan for continued remote learning for the remainder of the school year. That is exactly what we will do in RSU 16. If the Governor's stay-at-home order is lifted and community health markers indicate we can come together, then we may return to school. We understand this would take a miracle, but we are holding onto that sliver of hope our students and staff can have a chance to have closure for this academic year. Therefore, our buildings remain closed until further notice, but know our dedicated and passionate RSU 16 staff continues to work hard to clean our buildings, feed our students and provide continuation of learning.

April Vacation - April vacation week is still scheduled and it is important for everyone that this be a break from learning and work. During this time our Food Services Staff and Drivers will be taking a much needed break, so food will not be delivered over the April Vacation. To assist families during the April vacation the Food Service Staff will increase the amount of food delivered on Friday, April 17, 2020 to help cover food needs for the April vacation days.

Food Service - We will continue our Breakfast and Lunch program throughout the duration of extended school closure, with the exception of April vacation week. If anyone is in need of breakfast and lunch and is unable to get to one of the delivery points or bus stops, please contact Ellen Dore, 754-2834 or edore@rsu16.org.

Starting Monday April 13, 2020, in order to maximize social and physical distancing, we will ask each family to provide a container, tote, box or bag clearly marked with the number of meals needed for that family, so our staff can place the meals in the receptacle and reduce or eliminate the person to person contact that the food delivery system currently causes. It is still our expectation that a person will be present to receive the food delivery. We will not leave any food unattended. Your cooperation in this matter is much appreciated.

Continuation of Learning Plans - Our priority remains maintaining and strengthening relationships with our students and families. Now more than ever it will be important to keep our students engaged in the opportunities that our teachers are providing for them. We recognize that school closure has resulted in added stress for all of us and we do not want to add any additional stress to our families during this time. Our parents should never feel that they must replace their children's teachers or replicate a normal school day at home during this school closure. These are unprecedented times.

Zoom - We want to recognize the recent concerns that have arisen in regards to Zoom and the potential for uninvited guests to join the Zoom meetings with your child and their teacher. While Zoom has been working diligently on their end to address these security concerns by adding key features. Our teachers will now be utilizing enhanced features with their sessions, such as a password to enter the sessions, a virtual waiting room to ensure anyone who joins the meeting is an invited user, and we have disabled the ability for participants to share their screens or send files to other members of the group. We are confident these steps will ensure that our Zoom meetings remain safe for all of our participants.

Support - In these difficult times, it is so important to connect with others either by phone or electronically. Make it a priority to connect with others each day. We have enjoyed seeing so many pictures and videos.

However, we also know many are struggling, or will struggle in the future, with this new normal. Please reach out and let your child's teacher or principal know if you or your children need support. We will make sure school counselors, social workers, nurses, and others will make contact with you.

Our web page www.rsu16.org continues to serve as the most reliable hub for information as well as our official Facebook page, Regional School Unit 16.

Our children need us more now than ever. Encourage them. Stay connected. Stay healthy. We are in this crisis together.

Sincerely,

Ken Healey and Amy Hediger