

June 12, 2020

Hello GFB Families:

The Commissioner recently released two important documents that, although not specifically focused on our return in the fall, may suggest what education in MA could look like. These documents include Guidance on Required Safety Supplies for Re-Opening Schools and Initial Summer School Re-Opening School Guidance. The “safety supplies” document communicates required supply items and ordering recommendations for the first 12 weeks of school. The “summer school re-opening document” provides introductory guidance for summer programming. Although these documents may be helpful in guiding school districts’ plans for in-school safety precautions, specific initial guidance on fall re-opening is not available. Definitive guidelines on class size, recommendations on developing academic programs, and approaches to teaching and learning have not been released. As a result, specific information about schedules and what school will “look” like in September remains uncertain.

Given the number of changes in social practice as well as significant modifications to the school environment that we know are certain, we will begin our planning using assumptions and current case scenarios. Recent guidelines and recommendations may result in some challenging scenarios for students, families and staff. Winthrop is one of the hundreds of school districts in the Commonwealth that will wrestle with these challenges. The common denominators among us should translate to productive brainstorming, problem solving and meeting the needs of our community.

The need to keep students engaged in learning over the summer has never been more important. The influence of such an extended period of remote learning may translate to students who have less depth in understanding. What we know is that superficial understanding often results in difficulty in holding on to and applying information. We need you, our students’ first and most important teacher, to help us make a final push for student learning before September.

The remote learning plans, as well as the online resources/opportunities, will remain posted all summer. These activities, lessons, and links together with the materials being returned to students are ideal tools to reinforce learning and maintain sustainable engagement. Endurance and focus are critical elements of successful engagement and are the essentials that lead to sustainable learning. Our remote learning plans can help your child in those ways and more.

In addition to visiting the our remote learning link, Lexia will be available throughout the summer. Students should be working on Lexia a minimum of three times per week for 20 minutes at a minimum. I-Ready will also be available to first and second grade students through mid-August. Despite our best efforts and given the varying challenges families experienced in keeping students engaged with remote learning, it is reasonable to expect some significant discrepancies among student skills. Our staff are extremely skilled at working with a diverse

profile of students within classrooms. I have every confidence that they will be able to address the needs of students and the circumstances under which we will be teaching.

Recognizing that many students will continue to engage in remote learning and other online opportunities this summer, the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office is offering workshops on online safety for families. Please click here for information that is available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

This will be my last weekly Fort Report. Historically I have sent few if any schoolwide notifications using email or phone. If there is a matter that is time-sensitive or warrants mass communication, of course I will use that system. With that said, families should check our school website regularly for updates on a variety of matters. Student-centered social and academic opportunities that I am made aware of, relevant information from the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, and plans having to do with the start of the 2020-21 school year will all be posted there. Discussions and plans for classroom placement, information events and registration will also be posted on our webpage.

Summer regression is nothing new but this year, it feels especially stressful. After all there is a difference between gaining no ground and losing ground; that is the spectrum of regression. Instilling a routine, communicating a sense of responsibility for learning and minimizing student regression has been hard work and forced families to make tremendous sacrifices. Teachers have worked hard to create engaging lessons and experiences that will assist students who were forced to learn independently. Let's not abandon our efforts. If we capitalize on the sacrifices we have made and the hard work put in by all, our students will realize the power they have over their own learning. And that is the first and most important lesson in creating life-long learners which is our ultimate goal.

Wishing you a wonderful, safe and fun summer...

Your Partner in Education,  
*Mrs. Pearson, Principal*