

May 4, 2020

Hello GFB Families,

Recently the Commissioner of Education released the next phase of the remote learning plan recommendations. This was in response to the Governor's decision to keep schools closed for the remainder of the academic year. Although the document is based on previously released remote learning plan guidelines, this latest revision enhances and refines the plans.

It is an extremely lengthy and dense document but it does set apart two areas calling for a deeper focus (note: this language is lifted from the document):

- Further defining the recommended elements of a quality remote learning program, including a focus on teaching the content standards most critical for student success in the next grade level.
- Encouraging districts to move all students towards successful engagement in remote learning, with a focus on addressing fundamental needs.

To clarify and help this be meaningful to you, the first bullet implies that not all grade level content had been covered by March 13<sup>th</sup>, our final day of school this year. It should be obvious that with students having lost the equivalent of the last third of the school year, not all areas of the curriculum had been covered. As a result, a "focus on teaching the content standards most critical for student success in the next grade level" is necessary. The Dept. of Elementary and Secondary has identified those content standards (also known as power standards) that need to be covered while students learn remotely.

The second bullet recognizes the varying needs and challenges within families. Reference to "successful engagement in remote learning, with a focus on addressing fundamental needs" means making learning opportunities available with built in flexibility to access instruction. Successful engagement also accounts for the varying ways that students learn. Direct and/or modeled instruction, experience-based learning activities, pencil/paper tasks, etc. are all approaches that help "move all students towards successful engagement in remote learning." The remote learning plans being created will include several approaches for engaging students in learning and allow for it to be implemented at the convenience of families.

Delivering instruction and developing assignments that can be accomplished by students remotely is certainly uncharted territory for all of us. Teachers will continue working together to coordinate their approach to teaching these "power standards". Planning, coordinating assignments and aligning expectations for student performance are important matters, too. It's fair to say that it is extremely difficult and time-consuming to coordinate teaching virtually. Teachers need to do this around the schedule of their families and their families' needs. Please know we are working on it now and a new learning plan will issue soon.

The resiliency of our staff in the face of the most challenging disruption to education in the history of our country is nothing less than admirable. And their commitment to ensuring your child has meaningful remote learning experiences is admirable. This week, May 4-8, is Teacher

Appreciation Week. In my opinion it could not come at a better or more deserving time. I appreciate and feel fortunate to be surrounded by and learn from some of the most dedicated professionals in teaching. Students/parents that would like to express a special thank you to a teacher can send a picture that includes a written message of appreciation to Ms. Tucker by Wednesday evening, May 6<sup>th</sup>. She will take care of the rest.

Please be reminded that *free* breakfast and lunch are available to all WPS students daily from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Winthrop High School in the back parking lot. The menu for Monday-Friday follows: grab & go bagel and cheese sticks, sun butter & jelly, turkey & cheese sandwich. On Tuesdays and Thursdays hot lunch options are available and include: chicken nuggets, cheeseburgers, chicken patty sandwiches, chicken chili with tortilla chips. If you are not able to come to WHS to pick up meals, please contact food services at 617-846-5500 (ext. 7210) to make arrangements for delivery.

I hope this week will bring renewed optimism to us all as we continue to adjust to our current and distant approach to life. We cannot allow this present “normal” to stop momentum in any part of our lives whether it be learning, pursuing goals or developing ideas and dreams. Stay positive, strong and healthy.

Your partner in education,  
*Ms. Pearson, Principal*