April 6, 2020

Dear Weston Families/Guardians,

Everyone in the Weston Public Schools hopes that you and your family are safe and healthy. As we navigate these unfamiliar and uncertain times, please know we are here to support you and your students. As Massachusetts Commissioner Jeffrey Riley said, “We are all in this together, working on behalf of our children.” Please reach out to us at any time if you are experiencing stress and need assistance.

On March 25, Governor Baker announced that public and private schools must remain closed until May 4, 2020 in order to prevent further spread of the COVID-19 virus. As a result, districts have been charged with providing remote learning opportunities for students to keep learning while remaining safely at home. Weston's School From Home has had a very successful start, and all students are benefitting from the outstanding work our educators are sharing on Seesaw, Google Classroom and other learning platforms. Our remote learning program mirrors state guidelines, in that students are engaging in learning for approximately half the school day, and student experiences are developmentally appropriate.

As we move into this extended time out of school, we wanted to share with you how special educators and related service personnel may be adjusting their support of your students, as a result of teachers introducing new material to students. With this in mind, we remain focused on the safety and well-being of students as well as maintaining connections between school staff and students. Remote learning cannot replicate in-person special education or related services. We are committed to providing specialized instruction and services to students, while remaining flexible and practical, given all the demands on students and families at this time.

Special Education and Related Services:
During the first weeks of Weston’s School from Home program, Special Education staff have collaborated with general education teachers to support students within their Google classroom or Seesaw classroom platforms. To address IEP goals, special educators and related services providers have set up and/or added to classrooms and have sent out materials and activities to students/families. Moving forward, based on individual needs, IEP goals and service delivery grids, some supports/services may change or be adjusted. This may include provision of additional recorded videos and activities, and small group, interactive services via telephone, Google Meet/Hangout or Zoom. Your student’s team chair will be in touch with you about your student’s special education services within their remote learning opportunities.

Counseling:
School counselors have been in touch with the students (or families of students) who receive counseling services. Counselors have communicated by phone, email and Google meetings/chat. This support will continue, but again, may shift and may include individualized interactive meetings via telephone/google chat or Zoom as well as small group (snack/lunch
group) meetings. The goal of counseling during this time out of school is to promote the student's participation in remote learning, while at the same time supporting how this change is impacting the student.

**Virtual Meetings:**
Weston Public Schools will be discussing with families about holding virtual IEP/504 meetings for those students whose meetings were missed due to school closure. Weston will be prioritizing meetings with mandated timelines (e.g. Annual Reviews). Team Chairs and Counselors will be in touch to discuss scheduling and participation options. As was shared in our last communication, evaluation timelines were paused when schools closed, because students were unavailable for the in-person component of testing. Therefore, initial and re-evaluation meetings will be scheduled once schools reopen.

**Out of District Students:**
For our families of students in out of district school placements, many special education day schools have closed, and residential schools are not operating their day component. That said, these schools are supporting students through remote learning plans that they have shared with families and Weston. Laurie Smith Michaels is in constant communication with families and schools during this time, so please reach out to her if you have any questions or concerns. As was previously noted, as schools reopen, Weston is committed to transporting students to their out of district placements.

**Resources:**
Please continue to refer to Weston's *School from Home* website and your school’s pages for resources for your student and family. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your student’s teachers, special educators, counselors and principal should you need anything.

Thank you for your patience, understanding and collaboration during this unprecedented time for our school community.

Sincerely,

**Jennifer C. Truslow**

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