April 24, 2020

Dear New Bedford Public Schools Families,

I continue to be encouraged by the strength of our community. People have united to support our students’ well-being and our teachers’ and staffs’ ability to keep the educational process moving forward. Like many of you, I am disappointed that schools will not reopen this year, but more saddened that we will miss the personal interactions – the spirit of the teaching and learning process. Through remote learning we are keeping academics alive and strengthening our remote connections to create more opportunities for quality learning experiences. We will use this challenge as fuel to spark creativity and new energy. This situation gives us an advantage to be more creative until our remote learning ends this school year on June 18, and beyond.

Our remote learning plan is a fluid process and is continuously enhanced as needs arise. It is not individualized to each student or teacher but rather it is a blueprint for all New Bedford Public Schools. This plan considers that technology access varies for our students and we understand that students with diverse needs may require differentiated instructional approaches. Our special education staff and related service providers across the district continue to connect with and support those students to the extent possible.

Our students, teachers, and many staff have been fully engaged since we began remote learning six weeks ago. Teachers are providing remote learning opportunities to students in a variety of platforms. Our team is using a variety of methods to keep students involved in learning. It is important to remember that although we are using remote learning tools and instructional materials, I do not expect remote learning to replicate the traditional school day. Remember, our remote learning structure focuses on:

- Providing opportunities for students to demonstrate learning while not in the traditional classroom setting receiving direct instruction from a teacher.
- Engaging students with materials, including academic packets, books, online programs, video lessons and more.

REMOTE LEARNING OVERVIEW
New Bedford Public Schools’ Remote Learning focuses on ALL students being:

- Engaged in remote learning for at least 3 – 4 hours each day (about ¾ their regular school day)
- Supported to reinforce the skills in which they have already been exposed
- Helped to apply and deepen their skills
- Motivated to extend their learning
- Provided the opportunity to connect with educators and content, multiple hours per day/week
- Supported to reduce the risk of learning loss

New Bedford Public Schools Remote Learning encompasses:

- Structured daily routines include time on learning and time for breaks
  - Lunch and recess are at the same time each day
  - End the structured teaching and learning process at the same time each day
- All students are expected to do some self-guided work combined with the support they will receive from their teachers

The New Bedford Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, ancestry, homelessness, gender identity, gender expression or immigration status.
The New Bedford Public Schools website provides many resources to support students and parents. Again, we expect students to spend at least 3 hours per day engaged in remote learning. We all benefit from having structure and routine. That will help students maximize their varied experiences based on their individual learning styles. Please access the many available resources available to you including your child’s teacher who can help the most: Teacher Email Addresses / Click here to see more on structuring your day

**Grading:** Through March 13, we had completed about 75% of our school year, meaning students were being assessed from September - March and that information will be included in the final grading process. The 15-week remoted learning timeframe will emphasize mastery learning. This will include a focus on student engagement and select learning tasks.

We are collaborating with and using guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as we refine this process. In this process my priority is to ensure that all students have equitable access to quality teaching and learning opportunities. With that, our staff is mindful of the variety of technological, health, disability, and language challenges that may be present.

Our grading process for the remainder of the 2019 – 2020 school year will vary for elementary and secondary schools. We will follow a credit/no credit system for the remainder of the year.

1. **Elementary Schools**
   - Students in K-5 have completed the first two trimesters and those grades will remain.
   - The third trimester, students will receive a grade of **meeting** or **not meeting** grade level expectations.

2. **Middle and High Schools**
   - Students in grades 6-8 and 9-12 have fully completed two terms and have completed CCAs (Comprehensive Common Assessments).
   - GPAs and grades will be based on terms 1 and 2. Terms 3 and 4 will be based on credit/no credit.
   - During this period of school closure, all middle and high school students can improve their course grades from the first half of the year by satisfactorily completing remote learning opportunities.

Please see Newbedfordschools.org to get more information about Grab and Go meals, student registration, and the Remote Learning opportunities. CLICK HERE FOR AT HOME STUDENT WORK.

**Internet accessibility:** we are currently working with the Comcast Internet Essentials Program to help provide internet services to families who are in need. We will be sharing more information in the coming days.

**Update contact information:** use this link Update email and phone number here to update your contact information. If you have any questions or need assistance during this time, please reach out to your child’s school or call our information line (508) 997-4515 for assistance. Stay on top of the latest information to help us all stay safe: Information to help us stay safe

Sincerely,

Thomas Anderson
Superintendent