

Cape Schools Open Minds and Open Doors

Community • Academics • Passion • Ethics

Marcia Abbott Weeks
Business Manager

Catherine A. Stankard
Director of Teaching and Learning

CAPE ELIZABETH SCHOOLS

320 Ocean House Road

P.O. Box 6267

Cape Elizabeth, Maine 04107

Phone: (207) 799-2217 Fax: (207) 799-2914

Del Peavey
Director of Special Services

Donna H. Wolfrom Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
dwolfrom@CapeElizabethSchools.org

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2:00 PM

Dear Staff, Parents, Students, and Community Members,

It is with a heavy heart and an abundance of caution and concern for our citizens that I have decided that Cape Elizabeth Schools will remain closed until Monday, April 27, 2020. Spring break is still scheduled as listed on our calendar. Teachers and support staff will continue to examine methods of communication with their students, and as a district we will continue to explore, create, and revise instructional methods in order that our students can continue to learn and grow without overwhelming parents and burning out staff. We must all remember that the closure provides a significant challenge to families that have to balance working at home or childcare with supporting their students' learning. It provides a significant challenge to teachers and support staff, as well, as they must now use technology in new ways and develop strategies for working with their students that they have never attempted. Many teachers and support staff are trying to balance watching their young children who are home and preparing lessons, contact experiences, and assignments for their students. Teachers will continue to try new methods and adjust until they become more adept at teaching in this manner. It will take a while for us all to adapt and we need to be patient with ourselves, and with each other, as we take on this steep learning curve.

Administrators are working on a steep learning curve as well. Yesterday morning, we discovered some of the challenges and frustrations of videoconferencing as we attempted to hold an administrative team meeting. We agreed that this would be a challenging way to try to teach a class. However, by the end of our conference we got better at patiently waiting for our turn to speak and in muting and unmuting our microphones. We were experiencing some of the difficulties that teachers, students, and parents are experiencing as we attempt to move out of our comfort zone in order to bring back a bit of order to our lives and continue to do our jobs.

During this period of school closure, custodians and maintenance personnel will continue to deep clean and maintain our buildings, and nutrition services personnel will continue to provide food for some of our families. In the midst of providing this service, Director of Nutrition Services, Peter Esposito is writing grants in order to have the funding necessary to provide for our families, as the nutrition service source of income, student meals, has come to an abrupt halt.

The principals and I have received much positive feedback regarding the efforts of our amazing staff during these difficult times, and we so appreciate your kind words and support. This is like nothing we have ever experienced, and we are making decisions and adjusting, as information and conditions quickly change. Please continue to practice social distancing and contact your primary health care provider should you experience symptoms.

I will continue to post communications and updates through letters and postings on our website. Stay well.

Donna Wolfrom