



Veazie Community School

1040 School Street Veazie, ME 04401
(207)947-6573 / FAX(207)947-6570

Superintendent of Schools & Principal: Matthew D. Cyr

March 25, 2020
9:00 a.m. EST

COVID-19 MEMO #6

VCS TRANSITION TO REQUIRED REMOTE LEARNING DAYS

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Beginning Monday, March 30, 2020, we will unite and take the first steps of a significant new educational journey as Veazie Community School brings remote learning to our students.

While none of us could have predicted even a few weeks ago that we would launch this dramatic new transition in education, I could not be prouder of the way VCS staff have come together to prepare themselves to teach your children from their own homes. And I could not be more grateful to all of you for your faith in our educators and in all of the hardworking staff at Veazie Community School.

This will not be perfect. Nothing can ever replace a talented teacher in a classroom. We know the challenges and inequities our students face. But over the past week and a half, I have seen VCS staff rise to this challenge in astounding ways. Your faith in them is deserved and earned.

Things have moved very quickly since the initial announcement of a two-week closure, which was extended to April 27 and now has the potential to be even longer. During this time, VCS staff created remote learning opportunities with the mindset that kids would be returning to school in a couple weeks. Over the past few days, incredible work has been focused on creating remote curriculum, dynamic schedules, and systems of accountability to ensure that every student is engaged with learning on a daily basis. Every grade level is equipped with an online communication platform and learning resource. We are also utilizing phone conversations as needed. Please make sure you and your children are in daily communication with the dedicated VCS staff—this is critical to the success of remote learning.

All relevant information you and your children need about engaging in remote learning will be provided by VCS teachers. Please do not hesitate to reach out to them if you have questions—just as they were before this school closure, teachers will continue to be your guide to instruction and (virtual) engagement during these unprecedented times. I will share a few key pieces of information:

- **Remote Learning:** Each teacher has his or her own online learning platform such as Google Classroom, Seesaw, IXL, Zoom, etc. Teachers will be communicating with you and/or your children regarding daily remote learning lessons, activities and schedules. ***Beginning Monday, March 30, all schoolwork assigned will be required rather than optional.***
- **Special Education Service:** If your child has an IEP, receives some of his/her instruction in special education, or receives special education teacher support services, we will make every effort to have them continue to receive instruction from their general education teacher, the same special education teacher(s), related service provider (OT, Speech, BCBA, and/or PT) and/or the education technician that usually teaches and provides support services. A member of your child's IEP team will contact you to discuss how instruction will be delivered.

www.veaziecs.org

"Small School, BIG Heart!"



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- **Electronic Devices:** VCS is ahead of the curve being a 1-1 school with iPads in PK and K, Chromebooks in grades 1-6 and MacBook Airs in grades 7-8. We have already completed one round of distributing devices to those who wanted them at home. If you initially chose not to pick up a device and have changed your minds, please communicate with your child's teacher to make arrangement for pickup. Parents will need to sign a release form for this to happen. It is completely fine if your child prefers to use a home device.
- **Meal Delivery:** We will continue to follow CDC and DOE guidance on the safe preparation and delivery of meals to those in need. If you are not currently receiving meals and would like to be added to the list, please email Food Service Director Betsy Brooks @ bbrooks@veaziecs.org.
- **Communication:** I will continue to use email, text, and social media for posting positive stories.

Education around the world will look tremendously different for the foreseeable future. We have entered into a brave new world (also the title of a great book). I have been immersed in some pretty incredible conversations and readings over the past couple weeks. I have learned more about myself as a person and leader than I ever thought possible. In a recent conversation with VCS Special Education Director Debrajean Scheibel, I shared the thought that the times we are in right now are pivotal for public education and will ultimately spring us forward. For decades we have been spinning our wheels, acknowledging that things need to change, looking for answers, shifting how we are doing things, but in the end, never *really* changing....and in most cases, abandoning major projects and initiatives after years of hard work by many. Right now, we are experiencing true change. Incredible change. Granted, it is trial by fire, but regardless, I have faith in the dedication, intellect and creativity of all VCS staff as well as educators around the world. I'm not saying the world is going digital, as you can never replace the classroom experience, but what I am saying is that in the end....when this is all over, after we acknowledge our mistakes (and I'm sure there will be some), there *will* be some incredible accomplishments. Students will have engaged that have never engaged before. Parents will appreciate teachers in a whole new way. Educational Technicians and all hourly school employees around the world will be seen and appreciated as the educators they are. Our kitchen staff will be hailed as heroes for continuing to provide nourishing food. Our custodians will be acknowledged as saviors for keeping us safe and healthy. The list goes on....

Yes, these are difficult times. Yes, we all have more questions than answers. We will survive. And I truly believe we will be stronger on the other side. Thank you for being the incredible people that you are. You are amazing. Your children are amazing. I would not want to be part of any other school community right now!

Take care of each other.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Cyr
Superintendent & Principal

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