



DRACUT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Steven Stone
Superintendent of Schools

April 9, 2020

Dear Dracut Public School Community,

I am writing to provide a number of updates related to our continued Remote Learning efforts:

SCHOOL CALENDAR: Last evening, the School Committee unanimously supported a recommendation to alter the current district calendar. I call the community's attention to the following dates:

- Friday, April 10, 2020: **No school**
- Monday, April 20, 2020: **No school** in observance of Patriot's Day.
- Tuesday April 21st - Friday April 24, 2020: **School Days** (previously April vacation)
- Thursday, June 18, 2020: **Last Day of School** (previously June 24th)

The elimination of the April break allows the school year to end earlier than it would otherwise. We believe that our efforts to reestablish structure during the week and the recent shift to remote learning will be most effective if the school calendar continues without another substantial break. We also would like to ensure that once social distancing restrictions are lifted, students have an opportunity to enjoy the warm weather and a true summer break as soon as possible.

DRACUT HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR EVENTS: Since the beginning of our response to the closure of schools across the state, particular attention has been paid to events related to our high school seniors. To that end:

Prom: Currently, the Prom is scheduled for May 28th. Given the uncertainty of when schools may reopen and when state mandated social distancing rules allow function facilities to reopen, the district has secured a backup date for the Prom. **If the Prom could not proceed as scheduled, the Great Wolf Lodge** (host of the event) **has reserved Thursday, June 25th for us.** Mr. Manley will be providing updates to seniors and staff in the near future.

Graduation: Currently, graduation ceremonies will take place at the Tsongas Arena on Saturday, June 6th at 10AM. As with the Prom, the district has been evaluating alternatives should we have to delay graduation. **We have reserved Saturday, June 27th at 10AM at the Tsongas Arena as a first alternative.** If social distancing rules remain in place through late June, **we have also reserved Saturday, August 15th at 10AM as a second alternative date.** More information will be provided by Mr. Manley as we move into the spring.

Graduation Gowns: Arrangements are being made for seniors to be supplied with a cap and gown. This process will occur remotely. To simplify this process, for the Class of 2020, caps and gowns will be provided at no cost to all students. Mr. Manley will be providing additional detail in the coming days.

REMOTE LEARNING EXPECTATIONS: For those who have not read through the Remote Learning Plan I advise doing so. It establishes the framework through which remote learning will occur during the closure of our brick and mortar schools. **All students are expected to participate in all lessons provided by teachers and service providers.** If parents need help in supporting the learning of their children, please feel free to contact a building principal directly via email.

CHROMEBOOK LOAN PROGRAM: As of today, the district has loaned 625 Chromebooks to students in support of remote learning. As families settle in to the realities of having everyone work from home and realize that the sharing of a personal device is not realistic, especially given increasing time student will need, parents are welcome to contact a principal or building secretary via email.

MEALS PROGRAM: The district's Meals Program is providing breakfast and lunch for an average of 230 students per day. This program is available to any Dracut child. Meals can be picked up Monday-Friday (including holidays) between 8AM -12PM at Dracut High School or the Greenmont Avenue Elementary School.

MUSIC PROGRAM AWARD: I am pleased to announce that for the second year in a row, the district has been honored by the NAMM Foundation with a *Best Communities for Music Education Award*. The Dracut Public Schools is one of only sixteen districts in Massachusetts to be honored in 2020. Thank you to Dr. Cardella, our Coordinator of Performing Arts for her efforts and support, and congratulations to our music educators, Ms. Bamford, Mr. Bruce, Ms. Callahan, Mr. Carotenuto, Ms. Lasyone, Mr. Lobenstine, and Mr. Cooper, for their passion and dedication.

In closing, I want to thank all of our educators, administrators, paraprofessionals, office personnel, custodians, maintenance staff, and food service employees who have worked tirelessly to respond to the myriad challenges we have tackled over the past month. I am humbled but not surprised by the *esprit de corps* I encounter every day. I would also like to thank the community for their continued patience as we learn to become a virtual school system on the run. When this ends, and it will end, we will be stronger than even.

#MIDDIEPRIDE

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Stone".

Steven Stone
Superintendent of Schools