



WEST HAVEN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

"Schools Committed to Excellence"

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NEIL C. CAVALLARO

Superintendent of Schools

November 18, 2020

Dear Families, Students, and Staff,

The last several weeks have been quite hectic and challenging to say the least. As you know, COVID cases are spiking throughout the State, and several surrounding school districts have chosen to go to a remote learning model. Through the process of contact tracing, we have been required to quarantine teachers, students, at times entire classes, and support staff. Since many of our teachers live in communities that have chosen to go fully remote, they have been forced to request time off to care for their own children through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). These circumstances have contributed to a staffing shortage, and I am becoming concerned about our ability to continue to offer students the quality of education that this community has come to expect from us. While the goal of the Board of Education has been to keep schools open as long as possible, in order to achieve that in the upcoming months I believe it is in our best interest to take a short pause from our in-person learning program to move into a remote plan for the week after Thanksgiving (November 30th – December 4th). We know that families, even in small groups, will gather for the holidays, students will be returning from college, and many will be out shopping for gifts and groceries. I am concerned that, as a result, the number of positive virus cases will make it even more difficult to keep schools open.

During our remote learning week, the district's administrative team and I will closely monitor the availability of staff and determine if it is feasible to get our students back in school as planned. Be assured that we will make every effort to do so, however, as I've said to you many times in my past notifications, we all must be prepared to change course with little notice.

Many of you have written to me about the need to make arrangements for childcare should a closure become necessary. It is for this reason that I am making this decision now, to afford you the next two weeks to make necessary arrangements. I understand the inconvenience that this may cause many of you, but as I said earlier, closing the buildings for one week may keep us in school for a longer period of time going forward.

During the week of remote learning, our staff will be working from their classrooms. We have done our best to supply teachers with the tools and support they need to implement a more interactive experience. Our staff did a great job providing an education to all of our children with little notice last spring, but I am confident that you will see an enhanced experience this time around.

I am optimistic that the week we have scheduled for remote learning will allow us to return to school on December 7th, that we are fully staffed, and most importantly, both students and staff, remain healthy and ready to return.

Again, I cannot thank you enough for the support and patience you have shown since last March. I hope that everyone in our community stays safe, and that you will enjoy the Thanksgiving recess.

Very truly yours,


Neil C. Cavallaro
Superintendent of Schools