

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope this message finds you well as we navigate through these incredibly trying times. It is hard to believe that it has been nearly four weeks since our school district initially closed due to concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus. So much has evolved in such a short time. I want to thank you for your continued support and feedback as we strive to normalize the shifts involved in educating our students from home.

This afternoon Governor Lamont announced that CT schools will remain closed an additional month, until May 20. I recognize this extended closure creates continued challenges for our families and our staff. As a school community, we are one hundred percent committed to ensuring that we provide our students and staff the support they need to achieve the best educational experience possible during these unprecedented times.

I can speak first hand about the impact created in my own home with three children, including a senior in high school, learning how to manage the expectations of distance learning -- at the same time that two working parents are vying for space and the use of technology. Not always a harmonious scene! I have also had an opportunity to talk with many parents and staff who have shared their challenges. It is important that we all recognize these dynamics, including the possibility of increased community illness and the number of families whose job status has been impacted due to the economic strains of this pandemic.

We truly are in this together, and our ability to adjust and remain flexible in our approach moving forward is crucial. I often speak of how fortunate we all are to be part of the Simsbury Public Schools. We are a community that has such involved and supportive parents/guardians, a community that has students who are motivated and ready to learn, and a community that possesses skilled and caring educators. Never have we needed to draw on our community strengths more than we need to now. Working together, we will absolutely support the well-being of our students, staff, and families.

I have no doubt that the lessons learned from this experience will strengthen us as educators moving forward. I have been impressed by the acts of kindness I have witnessed in the early stages of our transition and the efforts of our staff to engage students and families in this new way of schooling. As difficult as the last month has been, I must admit that I have been inspired by the work of our students and educators.

Thank you again for your continued partnership and involvement. I want to provide a few updates as you and your families head into April break.

Family Supports: Please visit our [Distance Learning](#) website

Parent/Guardian Survey: Later in April, we will send out a survey to all families to gather feedback on distance learning. We certainly value your opinion, and your responses will be extremely important to us as we continue to address areas for improvement around our distance learning program for students and teachers.

Budget Update: The Board of Finance will hold budget public hearings on April 21 and May 7. Public comment can be submitted to the Town Clerk in advance of the meeting. The budget sent to the public hearing contains a modest decrease in the mill rate, amounting to approximately \$50 for the median household.

Nutrition Services: Grab-and-Go breakfast and lunch will continue to be made available to students during the April recess (4/13-4/17). Distribution of meals will occur at Simsbury High School, 34 Farms Village Road, on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 AM–12:00 PM.

School Calendar: Once again, schools have been closed for an additional month by the Governor; the closure was officially extended until May 20, 2020. The last day of school is scheduled on Monday, June 15, 2020. Graduation is scheduled on Friday, June 12, 2020. Any changes to the graduation plan will be communicated in the upcoming weeks. School will be in recess April 10-17, 2020 as originally scheduled.

Be well,

Matt Curtis
Superintendent of Schools