



Michael P. Yamin  
Superintendent

March 12, 2020

### **Good Evening Region 16 Families,**

As you are all aware, we have been closely monitoring the current COVID-19 virus concerns and have been in constant contact with our Directors from the Naugatuck Valley Health District and the Chesprocott Health District. Over these last several days, we have seen an escalation in the concern across the state. Late this afternoon, I again took part in a conference call with all state superintendents where the Commissioner of Education alerted us of new information around the concern for the virus and about being proactive.

The Directors of both Health Districts have stated that as of this evening, there are no confirmed cases in our Region. While this is positive news for us, the threat of the virus impacting the Regional School District #16 is still potentially there. Therefore, in an effort to be overly cautious and to take on an abundance of precautionary measures to help ensure that our students and staff remain healthy, **we will be closing schools for two weeks (Monday March 16, 2020 through Friday March 27, 2020).** Schools will **reopen on Monday March 30, 2020.** Thus, hopefully we will remain in school until April 9<sup>th</sup> and maintain the existing April vacation schedule as previously identified by the BOE (April 10<sup>th</sup> - April 19<sup>th</sup>). Throughout this time, we will remain in constant contact with our local health districts, community stakeholders, head nurse, and the recommendations of the CDC (Center for Disease Control) every day in order to respond safely and responsibly to the new information as it becomes available.

We will have a normal day tomorrow and this will allow us the opportunity to educate our students about the purpose of the break, distribute learning materials, and provide Chromebooks as needed (4-12). This will also allow our students the ability to collect any belongings they may need. Please remind your children to clean out all personal belongings from their lockers. They have also recommended that people continue to follow all relevant guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control. **All school activities and school usage privileges are cancelled during this time.**

### **The School Year and Education**

This afternoon, Governor Lamont issued an executive order to waive the 180-day school year for all school districts; however, this comes with a caveat. On the conference call this evening with the Commissioner of Education, it was clarified that we may still be required to make up as many missed days in June as we can (until June 30), unless we have a state-approved waiver for “distance learning plan.” As I mentioned in my previous letter, our leadership teams have put together supplemental work (that you will be able to find on our website next week) for our students in grades K-12 to keep them connected to school during the closure. That said, there are considerations to be made related to providing students with special needs related services and so, the work being provided is considered “supplemental.” If at a later time, we are able to ensure we are able to meet all the State’s requirements,

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we could potentially apply for a waiver. I explain this just because I believe what was heard in the Governor's press conference left us with a different impression. We will begin to address this over the course of the next two weeks and I will keep the communication as transparent as possible. I do not have all of the answers, however I am 100% confident that we will work through this collectively and as rationally as possible in these uncertain times. I am mindful that there is much debate over what has turned into a media frenzy, and I share that frustration. With that being said, we are doing the best we can in what has turned into an unprecedented situation for all of us.

Our position in Region 16 in collaboration with our certified and non-certified Union Leaders and BOE encourage the opportunity for students to continue active learning through our Continuity of Instruction Plan. We are requesting that staff monitor their emails daily and provide guidance where necessary daily through Schoology for students. I am aware that in some lower elementary grades the degree or previous expectations may vary. However, any support you can prove is welcome and appreciated during this time. As a Region we will continue with our plan to provide lunch at both Woodland and Long River throughout the period of closure with the exception of our April break (Information to follow through our Food Service Director).

We will also continue to provide regular updates and information as events warrant.

Thank you again for all of your patience and support as we work through this together!

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