April 3, 2020

Dear Students, Staff and Families of New London Public Schools,

I am aware that all-staff, students and parents/caregivers have been working extremely hard to co-support students’ learning at home. I am very grateful for everyone’s commitment to helping our students’ succeed. Now that Week 1 of Distance Learning is completed for core academics, we will continue to collect feedback from all constituents, reflect, refine and communicate adjustments. Tonight, we will be reviewing key highlights of our core programming and will also share new information for our specials, electives and social-emotional programming. Thank you for reading carefully and for reaching out to any one of us should we be able to be of assistance to you.

School Calendar:
- NLPS’ Distance Learning School began on Monday, March 30th and will continue through April 9th.
- Please remember Friday, April 10th is a holiday and staff will not be working.
- New London Public Schools will be closed for April break from April 13th-17th. Students will not have formal assignments during this time, however, they are encouraged to continue to utilize the many, many enrichment activities we have posted on our district website under each grade level’s drop down. Please view “Extended School Closure Resources and then Distance Learning” to choose the grade level.
- Students should prepare to be awake and ready to connect with their teachers and classes between the hours of 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.
- It is expected that all students participate in these daily learning activities and assignments. Their activity will be monitored and will count towards their attendance.
- The district is continuing to follow the Governor’s Orders regarding school closures. As of today, all schools are ordered closed through April 20th. Additional updates, regarding school calendars, are expected on or around April 10th.

Graduation Ceremonies:
- Building leaders will be reaching out to engage with their student body regarding creative ideas for graduation ceremonies. At this time, it is unclear as to whether or not schools will be able to reopen this school year. Therefore, students and school leaders will be working to draft a variety of plans for various circumstances. Information will continue to be shared weekly.

NLPS Staff Supports:
- Staff will be available to support you live and through email communications from 9:00 a.m. -4:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.
- Staff will also be continuing to connect with families through regular phone calls home.
- Central Office is open. Please call ahead 860-447-6000 to make an appointment if we can be of assistance, to ensure the mandated social distancing protocols are in place. In addition, at the end of this letter there is a chart with the contact email addresses for department leaders regarding academic content. Also, please do not hesitate to reach out directly to your child’s building leaders or counselors with questions.

Technology:
- NLPS distributed one-to-one technology devices to our students, at the end of March. We are pleased that over 85% of our students have successfully received their own technological device and
• have access to WiFi to connect to Distance Learning. Students in grades K-2 received an iPad; students in grades 3-5 received a Chromebook and students in grades 6-12 also received a Chromebook. If you have not received a device or need a replacement device or charger, please Click Here to schedule an appointment with Technology.
• PreK students will be receiving an iPad to connect to Distance Learning. Please be on the lookout for information regarding technology distribution.
• If you are a parent who was not able to come to the school site to pick up your child’s technology device as of yet, or if your family is in need of assistance regarding WiFi access at home, please call 860-447-6084 or send an email to: support@newlondon.org so we can assist you.
• Every student will be using their district-issued email address. Most secondary students, grades 6-12, are familiar with such. Elementary students received their login information when they picked up their devices on Friday. If you are using an at home device and need this information, you may contact our PowerSchool Team at pshelpdesk@newlondon.org. These email accounts will allow students to connect virtually with their teacher, as assigned.
• NLPS staff will be connecting virtually with students through platforms called ZOOM and Google Classroom; as well as through a platform called See Saw (elementary only)
• If a student is still in need of Tech assistance logging in, please contact your child’s teacher.

Academics:
• Distance Learning is defined as a combination of academic lessons, which will be delivered online and through traditional hands-on learning activities posted on our website. A Core Academic Distance Learning Program has been developed for all students in grades PreK-12.

Core Academic Plans for Elementary Students, PreK-5:
• Elementary students began their online interactions and lessons with their teachers through the SeeSaw platform.
  ➢ Please click here to see how this platform works: https://web.seesaw.me/parents
  ➢ New academic activities, per grade level, have been posted on our district website under the “Extended School Closure Resources and then Distance Learning” tab. Please utilize these learning opportunities for your student as well.
  ➢ In the coming week, students will be receiving more assignments from all their teachers on the SeeSaw platform. In addition to these assignments each day, students in K-2 should be reading 20 minutes and be doing 20 minutes of a teacher assigned math program; students in 3-5 should be reading 30 minutes and doing 30 minutes of a teacher assigned math program.
• Please Click Here for an overview of the elementary Distance Learning Plan from Dr. Hills-Papetti.
• Please Click Here for a chart of each academic department’s leader and contact information

Core Academic Plans for Secondary Students, grades 6-12:
• Secondary-Level students, grades 6-12, began engaging in online interactions and lessons with their teachers through the Edgenuity platform.
  ➢ Please click here to see how this platform works: https://www.edgenuity.com/video-library/
  ➢ New academic activities, per grade level, have been posted on our district website under the “Extended School Closure Resources and then Distance Learning” tab. Please utilize these learning opportunities for your student as well.
• Please Click Here for an overview of the secondary Distance Learning Plan from Mr. Tommy Thompson.
• Please Click Here for a chart of each academic department’s leader and contact information
• In addition, information has been posted regarding AP (Advanced Placement) courses (Click Here) and the SAT assessment (Click Here) on our “Extended School Closure Resources and then Distance Learning” drop down.

Academic Plans for Specials, Enrichments, Social-Emotional Development, Guidance, and Electives:
• Starting Monday, April 6th, Arts, STEM, Health, PE, Social-Emotional Development, Guidance, and Electives lessons will be shared on our district website. Please click the “Extended School Closure Resources” tab, select “Distance Learning” and view the drop down for each content area. Essentials teachers will be interweaving lessons into students’ daytime instruction as well, through Google classroom.
  ➢ Arts (Art and Music), PreK-12: Please Click Here for more details.
  ➢ STEM Lessons, PreK-12: Please Click Here for more details.
  ➢ Health and PE (Physical Education) Lessons, PreK-12: Please Click Here for more details.
  ➢ Secondary Core Electives, 9-12: Please Click Here for more details.
  ➢ World Languages, 6-12: Please Click Here for more details.

Academic Plans for Special Education, English Language (EL) and 504 students:
• Special Education, English Language (EL) and 504 students and their families should have received more specific information regarding academic programming for their student, from the Special Services, EL and Guidance departments. This customized communication and programming will continue to be on-going regularly between teachers, guidance counselors and families.

Mental Health Supports:
• Social-Emotional and Mental Health supports continue to be available through school-based teams for all students.
• Please Click Here to find contact information all social workers, psychologists and school counselors.

Professional Development Opportunities for Parents/Guardians:
• The CT State Department of Education has recently published opportunity for parents looking for information on how to support their children during this time. Topics include Social Emotional Support for Students, Supporting Students with Special Needs, English Learning and Continuation of Education, and Early Childhood.

Food Services:
• We will continue distributing meals on Tuesdays and Fridays via school busses and vans, at 36 newly designated stops throughout the city.
• Please reference NLPS’ Social Media and district website for a graphic containing bus stops and times.
• Tuesday’s meal distribution will give out 3 days’ worth of food, and Friday’s distribution will give out 4 days’ worth of food. Students do not need to be present for an adult to pick up a meal bag.
• Reheating and cold-holding instructions will be provided in each meal pack. If you do not have the means to reheat or store frozen meals, or if you need additional information please contact Samantha Wilson: wilsons@newlondon.org

• Please note for families seeking food we will need information verifying the total number of students. A separate communication will outline this process next week.

School-Based Health Center:
• The School Based Health Center at Winthrop School has closed its regular hours and is now only available by pre-made appointment. The phone number for families to call to schedule an appointment is: 860-437-4555.

COVID-Resources and Community Resources:
• 211: Please visit the 211 website for additional services that 211 is providing during the COVID-19 Pandemic: [http://www.211.org/services/covid19](http://www.211.org/services/covid19)

• United Way: Please click the following link for updated information regarding local Mobile Food Pantries - [https://www.uwsect.org/foodbank/mobile-pantry-distributions](https://www.uwsect.org/foodbank/mobile-pantry-distributions) While the Mobile Food Pantries have been discontinued at this time, other resources can be found on this page.

• Please continue to view our district website, COVID-19 section, for additional resources that aim to educate, inform and support families and students.

Communication:
• Questions and Answers: We are continuing to field and respond to the questions that are coming into our survey, which is posted on our district website. Please continue to view our written responses to such questions and continue to write in with any others on your mind.

• School Messenger: [Click Here For Directions](#) for families and students to sign up for School Messenger. We use this to communicate school and district-based communications via phone call and text message. Please be sure you have registered yourself and that you have signed up to receive BOTH school and district messages.

• In addition, the district communicates through 3 main avenues:
  ➢ 1. Our district website [www.newlondon.org](http://www.newlondon.org)
  ➢ 2. Facebook @NLPS.CT
  ➢ 3. Twitter @NLPSWhalers

• We have enjoyed making and publishing a variety of videos for students and families this week.
  ➢ Please [Click Here](#) to see the “Welcome to Distance Learning” video.
  ➢ Please [click here](#) to see tutorials for Edgenuity.
  ➢ Please [click here](#) to see educational video series for students and families.
  ➢ Please follow us if you wish to stay connected through our Social Media platforms. The district social media site will host all communications. School-based Facebook sites, will only host school-specific information.

• The Superintendent will continue to update the school community through weekly communications going out on Fridays.
  ➢ Note: The next district update is scheduled for Thursday, April 9th due to the Friday, April 10th holiday.

• Families should expect to hear from teachers and school-based staff daily.
On behalf of myself, the Board of Education and our entire faculty, I thank you very much for your partnership. We, like you, are learning and growing in new ways as we do our work through new online platforms. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us should you need any guidance or assistance with getting your child set up for Distance Learning at home. Like anything new, we are expecting to have to make adjustments to some aspects of our Distance Learning plan after we got started. Please continue to share strengths and needs of your child’s program with teachers and administrators. We are ready to assist you along the way. Teams of school-based leaders and staff are also available and can be contacted through their school emails. We look forward to supporting you and your child!

Sincerely,

Cynthia Ritchie
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Superintendent of Schools