



BRISTOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
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April 9, 2020

Good Afternoon Bristol Public School Families:

We hope you and your scholar(s) are settling into this new reality we find ourselves in. We miss our daily in-person interactions and anxiously await the day we can rejoin our school communities. We will continue our remote learning, and we are committed to providing all of our Bristol students with an engaging and supportive virtual learning experience. This afternoon, Education Commissioner Miguel Cardona and Governor Lamont announced that school closures will remain in place until Wednesday, May 20, 2020. To our Class of 2020 scholars and families, as Dr. Cardona stated and we echo, you have earned and deserve recognition for your hard work over the past thirteen years. We want to assure you that we will create a formal recognition of your academic, athletic and artistic talents. As time progresses, we will work with our high school scholars, teacher leaders and administration to communicate plans to recognize and celebrate your accomplishments.

As we enter into April vacation, we reflect on what we have learned throughout the past nineteen days. The feedback provided to us by students, families, and the experiences of our educators has helped shape our next phase in distance learning with the aim of providing an optimal experience for student learning. To that end, beginning on Monday, April 20, 2020, we will expand the ways in which our teachers will interact with our scholars. For the past few weeks, our teachers have engaged in professional learning series on utilizing technological platforms for delivering instruction.

Starting on April 20th, our pre-K through grade 2 teachers will begin using SeeSaw, an on-line platform that supports early elementary learning through video, photos, and greater interactivity with the teacher. Grade three through grade twelve teachers will utilize Google Classroom to provide instruction. This platform will allow teachers to provide direct instruction and increase the interaction among students. Using Google Classroom will also streamline the assignment, collection, and feedback of learning tasks.

What are our objectives for Phase III?

- to promote student and family well-being
- to make a connection with every student and provide support based on student needs
- to offer students feedback on their learning
- to expand the use of interactive online learning tools and resources that engage students' hearts and minds

How will my child begin?

Teachers will email students directly to their Bristol Public Schools email accounts with the information they will need to log into Clever/Seesaw and Google Classroom. Between Monday, April 20, 2020 and Wednesday, April 22, 2020, teachers will provide an orientation to SeeSaw or Google Classroom for both students and families. Teachers will also post their first lessons or assignments on April 20th. The presentation below is a helpful introduction to Google Classroom: [Google Classroom Parent Presentation](#).

What do I need to know now?

- **Schedule** - Teachers will post instruction and new learning tasks every Monday and Wednesday. Teachers will create assignments that will span two days. We have learned that our families need the

flexibility for students to respond to assignments at varying times throughout the day and within the week. Teachers will focus on providing feedback and responsive instruction to students based on how students are progressing on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Fridays, teachers will focus on ensuring students have the understandings and skills they need to progress to the following week. If you or your child have questions or concerns, please connect with your child's teacher so that he/she can provide further clarification, explanation or support.

- **Attendance** - Students will be considered "in school" or attending school, if they have completed the daily check out for their teacher once per day **or** if they have completed their assignment.
- **Grading** - Student learning in this phase for grades 6-12 will be graded based on success criteria or rubrics created by teachers for each assignment. We understand that this learning environment may present challenges that could impact student performance. Teachers will continue to employ best practices to ensure that students are clear on the expectations for the assignment, are provided the instruction necessary to complete the task, and were given formative feedback about their progress before a grade is assigned for any assessment. Teachers will communicate regularly with students about their progress to ensure students are successful and demonstrate academic growth.

What do I do if I need more support?

As always, we are here to support you. Please reach out to your child's teacher with any questions or concerns you have regarding class content. Parents may find the [Parent Resource Page](#) helpful in addressing some of their concerns. The [Technical Assistance](#) document may also be useful. If you need further technical assistance, please reach out to (860) 594-7090.

Do all teachers have Office Hours?

Yes, all teachers hold Classroom Office Hours.

What resources are teachers using to engage students?

Teachers are hard at work identifying new ways to present learning and engage students. Here are some of the tools and resources they are using:

- **Screencastify** - Teachers use this Chrome extension to record mini lessons or offer explanations for an assignment or concept.
- **Flipgrid** - This website allows teachers to create "grids" that facilitate video discussions. Each grid is like a message board where teachers can pose questions, called "topics," and their students can post responses that appear in a tiled grid display.
- **Khan Academy** - Teachers select from Khan Academy's wide variety of resources to supplement teaching and learning. The site offers practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard.

What digital tools are available to help students with online assignments?

There is a wide variety of tools available on the Internet. Here are some examples.

- **Natural Reader** - Natural Reader is a professional text to speech program. Students simply open Natural Reader and drag and drop a .DOC, .PDF, .TXT, .RTF, or .EPUB file into this online tool and Natural Reader converts text into spoken words.
- **Spechtexer** - This free online resource allows students to speak their responses into a dictation box and text will appear. Text then can be copied and pasted into documents or text boxes to create written responses to assignments.

How is BPS supporting students with IEPs and 504 plans?

We are providing multiple supports to students who have IEP and 504 plans. These include:

- Assignments posted in Google Classroom and SeeSaw will include appropriate and relevant accommodations aligned to students' IEPs or 504 plans. In addition, digital tools to support access to instructional materials may be used as posted above.
- Special education teachers, related service staff and 504 case managers have created individualized learning activities based upon individual learning plans to meet each student's needs and goals.
- Specialized instruction opportunities will be aligned with students' Individualized Educational Plans and might include co-taught classes within the Google Classroom or SeeSaw classroom or separate classes coordinated by the special education teacher or related service staff.
- Special education staff will also hold office hours and be available for student or parent check-in, feedback, and support
- Special education teachers will collaborate with and have access to their co-teachers' Google Classrooms and SeeSaw classrooms to review assignments, post learning activities and support students.
- School counselors will check in with their students with 504 plans. Students whose 504 plan includes direct related services (e.g. speech and language, counselor or clinician check-ins, etc.) will have individualized learning activities provided that address their individual needs.
- Students who receive special education instruction and services at out of district programs will continue to be provided continued learning opportunities through their specialized programs.

Throughout the past few weeks I have signed off every letter with a common valediction, *We are Bristol Public Schools! We are Bristol All Heart! We are all in this together!* As a reminder to our families and staff we would like to define, just what we mean by **WE ARE BPS**.

We are in this together;

Embrace and celebrate you and your child's successes;

Accept your limits and your child's limits-you are enough;

Recognize that this period of learning away from your school community is only temporary;

Explore self-care for you and your child;

Be assured we are here to support you and your scholar(s). We are proud and grateful for all of your efforts;

Provide flexibility and options; students do not need to have a six-hour school day at home;

Spend time with family; Laugh and love; Bristol is All Heart.

Take care of yourself. Take care of your families. Take care of your neighbors (follow social distancing).

In partnership,



Catherine M. Carbone, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools