



We make a difference in Enfield - every child, every day.

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Dear Parents, Staff, and Students of the Enfield Public Schools,

Since we received the disappointing news that Governor Lamont ordered schools closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, our focus has been on continuously improving our distance learning program and beginning to plan for the re-opening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year. I know you have been receiving regular updates from your child's building principals on enhancements to our distance learning program, as well as updates on how we can best provide some form of end-of-the-year celebration for our students under the current public health requirements. Our staff has been exploring creative ways to recognize students, with the hope of giving our kids a little sense of normalcy during this crazy time.

With regards to next school year, I really wish I had more to share at this point, but unfortunately, I do not. My hope was that guidance on re-opening schools would have been made available to us by now, but if I've learned anything over these past few months, it's that information doesn't come as quickly as any of us would like. It is my sincere hope that we are permitted to return to school next September as normal, and I have not been given any indication at this moment that we will not be allowed to return. What has been shared thus far is that school could look a lot different next year if we are able to return. There are many theories floating around about changes we will need to make in order to hold in-person classes next year, but until we receive official word from the State of Connecticut, I am going to hold off on sharing what are just theories at this point. Until the public health officials give us guidance, everything is just speculation. What I will share is what a top epidemiologist for the Department of Public Health shared with us late last week, namely that the virus is going to determine when and how we re-open school. I realize how frustrating this can be, and I share your frustrations, as the unknown serves to add to the anxiety this entire situation has caused. However, we have to continue to plan for the worst and hope for the best, and I want everyone to know that the district is working tirelessly to plan for every option.

I realize there is not much new information in this update, but I thought it was important to share what we know at this point. More importantly, I wanted to address what I know is still on many of your minds, that is, how difficult this has been for everyone. I have received dozens of messages from parents, teachers, and students about the challenges people have faced these past few months. To be honest, one of the hardest parts of this process for me has been not having a good answer for the many concerns shared with me. The truth is, there really aren't any good answers because we are all experiencing this for the first time. I tell people all the time to do the best they can, as we will get through this – and I do believe that. I also realize, however, that hearing this over and over again while you or your child is struggling can be hard to hear. I want everyone to know that the challenges students and parents are feeling are not exclusive to you. Our entire staff is facing daily challenges among this new environment and are experiencing the same frustrations and anxiety, but what gives me hope is that no matter how difficult this is, our staff has not given up on overcoming these challenges, and we continue to get better every day. This process may never be perfect, but as long as we all remember what is most important – our kids – I know that, collectively, we will all get through this stronger. So, this Memorial Day weekend, I hope everyone takes a break from their devices, remembers those who have sacrificed for us, and enjoys a well-deserved break with family and friends (six feet apart).

Thank you - and stay well,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Drezek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" and the last name "Drezek" clearly distinguishable.

Christopher J. Drezek

Superintendent of Schools