

Martha's Vineyard Public Schools

Excellence and Equity For All Children

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April 2, 2020

To Our Valued Families,

We understand that the recent public health mandated closures of all schools have been extremely challenging for all families and particularly complex for families of students with disabilities. We appreciate your understanding, collaboration and support as we navigate this difficult time as a school community. Given the most recent advisory 3/26/2020, from Russell Johnston, Senior Associate Commissioner and State Director of Special Education, we are in the process of shifting toward remote learning for a longer period of time. While the health and safety of students, families and staff is paramount during this challenging time, we realize we will not be able to provide educational services in the same manner as before the school closure. While this will undoubtedly be a challenge, Martha's Vineyard Public School District is committed to working with our students, families and caregivers to navigate this unprecedented situation.

Please know we are doing the best we can under the circumstances to ensure students have equal access to the learning opportunities being developed and provided to our students. We appreciate your patience, understanding, and partnership in this process. We will continue to work hard to help families keep students engaged in practice of previously learned skills, to make them as accessible or provide alternatives. Special Education Teachers, Counselors, and Related Service Providers have been reaching out to families to assess each family's ability to access learning and services provided such as food provision. They are also available for support for students and families to answer questions about the materials and resources provided.

At present the District is exploring our capacity to hold remote/virtual IEP meetings where appropriate. We will provide further information as this process is developed and able to be used securely. While this option may not be feasible in all circumstances, we will certainly do our very best to accommodate as many parents/students requesting their previously scheduled meetings, as we can during the school closure. Please note that evaluations are being placed on hold at this time.

We are sending you heartfelt compassion given this crisis we are in. First and foremost, we are genuinely concerned for your family's safety and well being. It is not lost on us that this situation is very unsettling for our most vulnerable students, and their families/caregivers. We offer you our sincere commitment in getting through this together. Compassion, empathy, respect, and a commitment to collaboration will serve us well to that end. Please take care of one another, as this too shall pass. In the meantime, we are with you.

Nancy W. Dugan and Hope T. MacLeod