



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



March 17, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We are in unprecedented times and what I have seen and heard the last couple of days about your efforts has inspired me greatly. You are putting kids first in all you do. It is only normal for there to be a heightened sense of emotion as you make decisions in real time where consequences are going to create inconvenience, dissonance among your community, or disrupt norms. Not to mention, many of you have families and loved ones to care for. This has never happened before, and you need to trust your leadership instinct. While this situation evolves, new challenges will require new thinking.

What was important yesterday may not be our priority today. Attendance flexibilities we considered last week, now are irrelevant with all classes cancelled. We have shifted from short term considerations to longer term planning. Today the Governor's Executive Order confirmed the elimination of waivers. It also allows districts to keep their calendars as consistent as possible with their original end date.

Districts are now appropriately focusing on developing and implementing continued educational opportunities. As you roll out your plan, meet students' diverse learning needs to the greatest extent possible. We understand many districts do not have well-developed plans at this point. Strive for improvement with the resources you have available, and consistent with the evolving public health considerations.

Continue to lead with health as your primary responsibility. Do everything in your power to reduce community transmission. Limit congregations of people and minimize person-to-person interactions during drop offs or pickups. I shared an email with my staff at CSDE prohibiting congregations of people unless an emergency. Virtual teleconferencing has replaced team meetings, phone calls and emails are the primary forms of communication. Like you, the safety of our employees is also my priority.

Consider training your leaders how to communicate with teachers using virtual meetings and other approaches to professional development. Also consider how you can lead from a remote location. Thank you to Superintendent Shawn Parkhurst for this video tutorial on Zoom: <http://openmic.link/16gn>. Just a reminder, when considering professional development, your RESCs are ready with resources. Have teachers focus on building their capacity to reach their learners remotely. To allow this to be the focus, we plan on waiving requirements around teacher and leader evaluations.

Tomorrow you will receive information about a Superintendents only call. Thank you for your commitment to your students, staff and community at large. Together, we got this!

In Partnership,

Dr. Miguel A. Cardona  
Commissioner of Education