



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



March 11, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for the commitment you have shown to your students, staff, and community during this difficult time. The leadership you have shown by making difficult decisions and the work you have done to provide opportunities for students despite the uncertainty of COVID-19 has been impressive and inspiring.

We have areas of significant widespread transmission to the south and east of CT borders. As we increase the number of testing stations, I expect there to be an increase of reported cases and communicable transmission. As you know, it takes up to 2 weeks for symptoms to show. For that reason, we support the Governor's recommendation to eliminate state agency activities that assemble large groups of people. We encourage districts to do the same for non-academic assemblies of people. While typically healthy students have shown greater resistance to major illness with COVID-19, they may still transmit it to others in their home or school. Limiting mass gatherings, including large lunch waves where possible, is recommended.

We urge superintendents to use the email sent to you Monday to communicate with the CSDE. We have shifted staff resources to have a Bureau Chief from our Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs Office and our CSDE School Health Administrator monitor the inbox and respond within an hour to each inquiry. All emails are reviewed by a team that, when necessary, includes input from other state agencies including but not limited to the Department of Public Health, Office of Early Childhood, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, and when needed, the Attorney General and Office of the Governor. Your concerns about student safety are our greatest priority!

In the coming week, we will have more guidance on how to address student attendance and truancy as well as information on the waivers for 180 days.

We will host a Superintendents' call tomorrow, Thursday, March 12, at 2:30 p.m. Ann Marie Hitchery, Executive Office Manager, will email you with call information tomorrow at noon. This call will provide updates on waivers, event cancellation, assessment schedule, and health related updates along with a question & answer period.

Thank you, once again, to those who have shared communications with your school community making the difficult decision, like many college Presidents have made, to eliminate large gatherings. We will all experience significant inconveniences, however, our decisions in the next several weeks will protect lives.

In Partnership,

Dr. Miguel A. Cardona
Commissioner of Education