



NMRSD Update Saturday, April 11, 2020

Dear NM Community,

I hope this update finds you healthy during what has been a difficult few weeks and if the experts are right, a few more are ahead of us. I would also like to wish everyone a happy Easter and Passover.

Having my own three kids at home, I realize the toll this crisis is taking on all of them. Thankfully kids are resilient and will hopefully look back on this time, like the rest of us, with some lessons learned. To that end, I have included a post that I came across on Facebook. While this is something some of you may have already seen, I think its message offers a different perspective. I am not sure of the identity of author, but wanted to share this message with you:

Massachusetts schools have been out for weeks and if they go back May 4, they would be out for over seven weeks. If they cancel the rest of the school year, students would miss 2.5 months of education. Many people are concerned about students falling behind because of this. Yes, they may fall behind when it comes to classroom education...

But what if...

What if instead of falling "behind", this group of kids are ADVANCED because of this?

What if they have more empathy, they enjoy family connection, they can be more creative and entertain themselves, they love to read, they love to express themselves in writing.

What if they enjoy the simple things, like their own backyard and sitting near a window in the quiet.

What if they notice the birds and the dates the different flowers emerge, and the calming renewal of a gentle rain shower?

What if this generation are the ones to learn to cook, organize their space, do their laundry, and keep a well run home?

What if they learn to stretch a dollar and to live with less? Economic education that is so lacking in the US.

What if they learn to plan shopping trips and meals at home.

What if they learn the value of eating together as a family and finding the good to share in the small delights of the everyday?

What if they are the ones to place great value on our teachers and educational professionals, librarians, public servants and the previously invisible essential support workers like truck drivers, grocers, cashiers, custodians, logistics, and health care workers and their supporting staff.

What if among these children, a great leader emerges who had the benefit of a slower pace and a simpler life to truly learn what really matters in this life?

What if they are in reality AHEAD?

April Vacation

Commissioner Riley recently announced that districts can take whichever path they choose when it comes to April vacation. To that end, NMRSD has canceled April vacation through a vote of the school committee (on my recommendation) and a vote of the teachers' association.

The thought process behind this decision is with social distancing still in effect and the fact that most of us are homebound, it makes sense to continue on with remote learning so that we do not lose the traction we have gained through the first 2 weeks of its implementation. Also, I am not confident that school will resume prior to Memorial Day at the earliest and do not think it would be beneficial to go to school an extra 4 days in June (especially if we are still in remote learning mode) if social distancing has been relaxed by that time.

With Monday, April 20th being a state holiday, remote learning expectations will run Tuesday, April 21st through Friday April 24th. The result of working 4 days during the April vacation changes our last day of school from Monday, June 22nd to Tuesday, June 16th.

MCAS

Governor Charlie Baker signed a legislation yesterday which waived the 2020 spring MCAS requirement in grades 3-10.

The new law also gives Education Commissioner Jeffrey Riley the option of waiving the mandate that seniors in the Class of 2020 meet the MCAS-based competency determination in order to graduate.

I will keep the community informed once the commissioner renders his decision.

Family Resources

See attachment