

March 17, 2020

Dear Dover Sherborn Families,

As you know, the Coronavirus outbreak has created an unprecedented situation for schools across Massachusetts and the nation. I consider myself fortunate to be surrounded in our two communities with incredibly smart, thoughtful, and experienced individuals who can help me guide the schools. I cannot thank our boards of health, administration, and school committees enough for their support. Together we will work through these challenging times.

On Sunday afternoon, Governor Baker mandated that all schools in Massachusetts be closed effective today, March 17, 2020 until April 6, 2020. He stated that this three week closure was being driven by the advice he was receiving from health officials about the importance of slowing the community spread of Covid-19. In his announcements he has been very clear that the objective is to keep people away from each other and minimize one to one contact to the greatest extent possible. It is a known fact that people can spread this illness, in many cases without even knowing they are doing so. Simply talking to a neighbor can cause infection. With this in mind, we are asking families, to remain mindful that the school closure is *NOT* vacation time. Rather, it is a time for us to hunker down and stay away from each other. Receiving news of playdates being organized by families and teenage parties being held in local homes leaves me at a loss for words. This is where we need the support of all adults within our two communities. Please help in this regard and honor the wisdom of our boards of health who have asked me to share the following:

**The Dover and Sherborn Boards of Health have asked the Dover-Sherborn School District to share the following messages with you pertaining to current efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and beyond.**

*If you have any symptoms of illness (e.g., fever, cough, difficulty breathing), PLEASE STAY HOME and call your physician.*

*Although this time off from the regular school schedule is appealing for increased social activity, there is a reason that dramatic measures, such as closing schools, canceling/postponing events, and discontinuing non-essential Town services, have been instituted. Whether or not there are confirmed COVID-19 cases in our towns, we must behave as if the virus is already in the community. Keep in mind that this virus is clearly shedding for four to five days before patients become symptomatic.*

*To slow and limit the spread of the virus, we must all adhere to physical/social distancing guidelines. This involves avoiding coming in close contact with people from outside of your household. If you do go where there are others, stay at least 6 feet apart. Avoid gathering in public places. Be at home as much as possible or out in open, un-crowded spaces. Postpone get-togethers or hold them virtually. At the following link is a clear presentation about why this is critical. <https://medium.com/@ariadnelabs/social-distancing-this-is-not-a-snow-day...>*

*Boston area doctors are seeing indications of exponential spread of the virus in our area. Let's give physical/social distancing a concerted effort to see if we can get this under control now.*

As a parent myself, I recognize that the requests and sacrifices being asked of you are unprecedented as well. Typically we all take reprieves when our children “go out to play” or join with others elsewhere. However, this is clearly not an option right now. As such, later this afternoon I will be sending out notification of our plans for providing remote learning opportunities while our schools are closed. Although they can in no way replicate the school experience, we do think you will find the information helpful.

Thank you for your continued support as we move through this challenging period.

Sincerely,

*Andrew*

Andrew Keough

Superintendent of Schools