

Superintendent Report for June 2020

Dr. Pam Vogel

We are now in our final weeks of virtual school and, once again, I cannot express enough gratitude to all of our staff who have truly extended themselves to see that our students and families are receiving as much as we possibly can give to them through this time. Teachers and para-educators have personally been reaching students and families, administrators have communicated with educators and families to see that everyone feels connected, food service staff members and other staff working alongside are dutifully packing meals every week, bus drivers and staff are making deliveries, office staff are making sure that all of the business responsibilities are recorded and handled correctly through this time, and our custodial staff consistently sees that our spaces are disinfected, so that when we do return to school, everything is ready. Everyone has made gallant efforts to ensure that our Region One schools are doing all we can to serve students.

Increased Access to Internet Coverage

The state is aware that we have areas and pockets of the state with poor or no access to quality internet services.

To try to correct this for our region, a group from Region One and several Sharon citizens have surveyed families to understand any technology challenges. These data are planned to be put into a published form soon and it will be used to help draw the attention to the Connecticut legislature. Representative Maria Horn has been key in wanting the data. As we are understanding now, more than ever, quality access to the internet is necessary for everyone. Without it, we have an equity gap that we should not accept.

Additionally, there is an updated compilation of the packages and offers internet providers across the state are making to Connecticut residents to get online and stay connected at home through the COVID 19 crisis.

Increased Access

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11j0mUk77RUDPfd7nB5icSauZH0UMJlvH/view?usp=sharing>

T-Mobile

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XQoK54SPdRG7wQRqMvvh4aM_tgZMEjR5/view?usp=sharing

I have asked principals to provide the names of families who are having difficulty accessing the internet, so that we can provide them this information about reduced costs. We are also considering reaching out to each communities' social service agencies to assist with this endeavor.

More Technology

The co-chairs of the Governor's COVID-19 *Learn From Home Task Force*, [announced](#) that the first wave of Dell laptops that are being donated to Connecticut high schools by the Partnership for Connecticut are arriving slightly ahead of schedule and will begin to be distributed to districts starting next week.

The Partnership is donating 60,000 laptops in total. Due to the large global demand for the products, they are expected to arrive in Connecticut in three waves and will be distributed on a formula-based approach that prioritizes equity, student need, and safe distribution. Dell is in direct contact with the districts' IT directors to coordinate delivery and logistics. A total of 19 districts are expected to receive the products, the remainder of which are in the process of being manufactured and will arrive ready for immediate use.

Our school is a recipient of these. We will need to find a safe way to distribute these to all of the High School students, so that each has an alternative means to do schoolwork. We are appreciative of Dell and their commitment to assist students during this time.

Re-Opening Schools Advisory Committee- June 4

With the input from our administrative team, we have formed an ad-hoc committee that will begin meeting on June 4 to discuss and provide feedback on potential ideas for how and when we reopen schools. The committee is comprised of members who represent administration, technology, social services, food services, health and

safety, and business. Currently, the focus will be on summer school. The role of the committee is to hear from the administrators who have read the research and examined models from other places, as well as hear the ideas from the Litchfield County Re-Opening Task Force organized through EdAdvance. We would like the thoughts and feedback from members of this committee, so that we do our best to attend to all aspects that must be considered.

Summer School

The Administrative Team has been meeting twice a week and one of our most important recent topics has been summer school. We want to make learning enjoyable; at the same time, be certain that those students who have not been showing adequate progress or who have produced little or no work, have learning needs attended to before the next school year begins.

There is much to be planned, as we expect some families will elect to not have their students leave home for instruction. So, we are planning for virtual learning, as well as at-school learning (and these may be outdoor spaces). We also know that we must follow all of the CEC guidelines. We must also provide Extended Year Services to students with special needs whose Individual Education Plans require this.

Teachers have provided the list of students recommended for this support. We also have a list of teachers who are able to provide instruction. Now we are requesting families to let us know if their child will participate in some form of summer school. We cannot make summer school mandatory, but for those families who choose to have their students(s) not attend, there will likely need to be time established during the school day beginning in the fall to allow for additional learning support, so that we can avoid gaps in their learning.

End of Year Evaluations and Goal Setting

In the second week of this month, each administrator will have their end of year evaluations and goals for the year ahead discussed. Times have been arranged for Lisa and myself to virtually meet with each of the administrators.

Regional Strategic Plan

Our Administrative Team continues to work on this, so that on June 8, each school will be able to use the plan Regional Plan to then establish their school plans with their own action steps, timelines, and resources.

Graduations

Every school has plans in place that have met the criteria, as outlined in the CDC report. It's been a great effort on the part of the principals, their staff, and their boards, to ensure that we can create the best possible ceremony that we can, under the current circumstances. The newsletter that is currently being completed and then printed is a very large edition this time. It will include the photos and names of all of the 8th grade graduates and the seniors. We will have a copy for each graduate ready for them to pick up when they pick up their diploma. This same edition will be online on each school's website for the public to see.

Finally, as I leave my position here at Region One, I want to thank everyone for my time here. I am looking forward to doing more with my family; as our family grows and spreads out over the country, I feel a great need to be with each of them as much as I can. But I will miss the people here. I have had the good fortune of knowing so many wonderful people who have been supportive and caring and are making a real difference.

There is a song from the show "Wicked" that always reminds me of what it is to say good-bye to those who come into our lives: *"You'll be with me like a handprint on my heart. And now whatever way our stories end, I know you have re-written mine by being my friend."*

I wish the very best for everyone in our region. I know that you all care and will continue to see that each decision is made in the best interest of the children here.