



## EAST LYME PUBLIC SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 220 • East Lyme, Connecticut 06333 • (860) 739-3966 • Fax (860) 739-1215

Jeffrey R. Newton  
*Superintendent of Schools*

Amy Drowne  
*Assistant Superintendent of  
Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment*

Kimberly Davis  
*Director of  
Student Services*

Maryanna Stevens, CPA  
*Director of Finance, Marketing,  
and Growth Management*

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

May this letter find you and your family doing the best that you can every day as we navigate this new normal. I think of all of you often as a fellow parent attempting to straddle that fine line of being a working parent and homeschool educator to two children. The question that I have started to ask myself each day is, "Did I make a good faith effort today?" If the answer is yes, then today was a good day!

During this time, East Lyme Public Schools is choosing to define that "good faith effort" as engagement. Engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism and passion that your child(ren) show when he/she is learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education. Since engagement itself is the single most important factor during this time, I wanted to provide further guidance as we look ahead to cycle 6 (Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup> Continued Educational Opportunity) and beyond. Novelty of how we engage your child is key to keeping your child excited for learning as each week passes. The choice as to how your child engages in each cycle of continued educational opportunities is driven by your child's interest and desire to learn. The relationship between your child and their teacher(s) is key to creating a support system around your student during this time. Most importantly right now, is the relationship that exists between you and your child and the role that education plays in your home. All these factors together are pivotal to every student's success over the coming weeks.

The two key structures students must use to seek engagement are relevant and authentic continued educational opportunities and teacher office hours where staff provide individual and small group feedback on a weekly basis. As you know, our Friday release is meant to provide flexibility to both students and families so that learning can occur during a time that is effective and meaningful for the student over the course of the week. Office hours are means to provide students feedback during the week. Starting in the coming weeks, teachers will be reaching out to students in an increasingly diverse way. It is important that teachers have various means to engage students over the coming weeks as time passes on. During office hours, staff will be using voice calls, live video sessions in Google Hangout, Google Meet or ZOOM, email, as well as communicating through Seesaw (PK-4) and Google Classroom (5-8). Our goal is to enhance the ways that we engage students during office hours so that we can continue to ensure that our students are learning and staying socially-emotionally strong. It is important to note that communication is entirely dependent on the group of learners that our educators serve. What works for one individual student may not work for another individual student as a means of effective feedback. It is about continuing to create choice for our students and educators in how they engage as learners in a virtual classroom environment.

From one parent to another, may you make that good faith effort today, tomorrow and the next day. Let's do the best that we can for our children and support them one day at a time. Our educators will continue to communicate and support your child in any way possible. We are here for you always. Take care.

Sincerely,

Amy Drowne, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

*East Lyme Public Schools will inspire, engage and educate each student to become a contributing citizen and a responsible, independent, and critical thinker.*