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135 BERKSHIRE STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02141

May 19, 2020

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

Approval of the Appeal to Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Regarding 185<sup>th</sup> School Closure Date for the 2019-2020 School Year

Recommendation: That the School Committee authorize the Superintendent of Schools to submit the attached appeal to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Regarding the 185<sup>th</sup> School Closure Date for the 2019-2020 school year and to permit the Cambridge Public Schools to go until its previously scheduled 181<sup>st</sup> day of June 17, 2020.

Description: Recommendation: Approval of the Appeal to Massachusetts Department Of Elementary & Secondary Education Regarding 185<sup>th</sup> School Closure Date For the 2019-2020 School Year This Appeal seeks to obtain permission from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to have the Cambridge Public Schools go until its previously scheduled 181<sup>st</sup> day of June 17, 2020 for the 2019-2020 school year as opposed to the 185<sup>th</sup> day of June 24, 2020. The basis for this appeal is that the Cambridge Public Schools staff, including its educators, prepared students and their families for the shift to remote learning on March 16, 2020 and began reaching out to students directly and individually in accordance with the requirements set forth in educator expectations that were issued by the school department.

Furthermore, this appeal, if granted, will enable the Cambridge Public Schools to shift to its plan for summer academic recovery for students more effectively and efficiently.

Supporting Data: Attached appeal to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Regarding the 185<sup>th</sup> School Closure Date for the 2019-2020 school year.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth N. Salim, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

VIA EMAIL

May \_\_, 2020

Associate Commissioner Helene Bettencourt  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148-4906

RE: Appeal of 185<sup>th</sup> School Closure Date for the 2019-2020 school year

Dear Associate Commissioner Bettencourt:

In accordance with the guidance issued by Commissioner Riley on April 24, 2020, the Cambridge School Committee has authorized the submission of this appeal of the 185<sup>th</sup> School Closure Date requirement for the 2019-2020 school year. It is respectfully requested that the Cambridge Public Schools be permitted to end the school year on June 17, 2020, which will be the 181<sup>st</sup> school day for the Cambridge Public Schools for the 2019-2020 school year, as opposed to ending the 2019-2020 school year on the 185<sup>th</sup> school closure date, which would be on June 24, 2020. In support of this appeal, the Cambridge School Committee states as follows:

The Cambridge Public Schools staff, including its educators, began its preparation of students and their families for the shift to distance learning on March 13, 2020. Then, starting on March 16, 2020, educators shifted to distance learning in accordance with educator expectations that had been developed by the school department, and which were distributed on March 16, 2020, which can be found attached and [here](#), along with the launch of a Cambridge Public Schools Digital Resource site, which can be found [here](#). These educator expectations were refined on April 2, 2020 and were updated again on May 1, 2020 in accordance guidance that was issued by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The school department also issued distance learning guidelines and expectations for its educators in the Office of Student Services, all of which can be found [here](#).

While distance learning has been refined and adjusted during the course of this school closure period, there was no break in the school year calendar as a result of this immediate start of distance learning on March 16, 2020 and teachers and students will have reached the 180<sup>th</sup> school day on June 17, 2020. If the Cambridge Public Schools continues until the 185<sup>th</sup> school day, which is June 24, 2020, Cambridge Public School teachers will have taught for 184 days, and will seek to be compensated for the additional four (4) school days. Each additional day has an approximate cost of \$500,000 or a total of \$2,000,000. The Cambridge School Committee believes that these funds could be better utilized as part

of the comprehensive recovery plan support for students. The Cambridge School Committee, the Cambridge Public School Department and the Cambridge Education Association (the union representing the educators) all believe that due to the ability of the school department and its educators to immediately pivot to distance learning on March 16, 2020 that it should be permitted to end its 2019-2020 school year on June 17, 2020.

In light of the foregoing, the Cambridge School Committee and the Cambridge Public Schools respectfully request that this appeal be granted.

Sincerely,

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui  
Chair of the Cambridge School Committee

Kenneth N. Salim, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Attachment and Links

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**ATTACHMENT A**





## CPS Educator Expectations during COVID-19 Emergency Closure

Updated 03.16.2020

Dear CPS Educators,

The Teaching and Learning Team (TLT) would like to thank each of you for all that you have done and continue to do to contribute to school and district-wide preparations to support the academic and social emotional needs of our young people and their families during this uncharted and stressful time for all of us. In particular, on incredibly short notice, you prepared our young people for this major transition on Friday with learning materials, resources, and encouragement.

While the teaching and learning experience for students during this extended period of emergency closure is not expected to mirror a typical school day, CPS is committed to providing **enrichment learning resources** for all of our students and families. We ask that you engage and connect with each student. This may be a period when our young people yearn for connection while they are apart from their teachers, friends, and school community. This guidance includes the following information:

- A. [Teaching & Learning Resources for CPS Educators](#): The new [CPS Distance Learning Resources Google Site](#), which includes the new [CPS Distance Learning Guidelines](#) and resources curated by the Instructional Council to supplement classroom resources.
- B. Expectations related to [Communication and Virtual Meetings](#)
- C. **Grade-Level Expectations** during the Emergency School Closure Period of March 16 - April 7.
  - a. JK - 2nd Grade
  - b. 3rd - 5th Grade
  - c. 6th - 8th Grade
  - d. 9th - 12th Grade
- D. [OSS Staff Expectations](#) during the Emergency School Closure Period of March 16 - April 7.

The TLT will be in communication with building-based leadership teams and curriculum leaders during the current emergency closure period. Should you have questions or ideas you would like to share with colleagues, please forward the information to your Principal or Learning Community Dean. Principals and Deans will forward information to TLT as appropriate through a shared "Learning Questions" Google Doc. TLT will monitor the document daily and will provide a response within 48 hours.

We know this is a rapid and constantly evolving situation and will send updates to this guidance on expectations as we receive additional guidance from the state and federal levels. In addition, your principal will continue to communicate school-specific information on our engagement and outreach. Thank you for your patience and for everything you do to support our students and families during this challenging time.

In Collaboration, the CPS Teaching & Learning Team:

Carolyn L. Turk, Deputy Superintendent  
 Maryann MacDonald, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education  
 Michelle E. Madera, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction  
 Alexis K. Morgan, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services  
 Timothy Sippel, Doctoral Resident



## CPS Educator Expectations during COVID-19 Emergency Closure

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### A. Teaching & Learning Resources for CPS Educators

- a. [CPS Distance Learning Guidelines](#)
- b. [CPS Distance Learning Resources Google Site](#)
  - i. Linked on this site are resources curated by Instructional Council to supplement classrooms resources.
  - ii. Bookmark this site as resources will be added regularly.
  - iii. Note the Tech Tools menu at the top that provides tutorials and information on tools you can use to create and distribute content.
  - iv. Note the Information from District Administration links
- c. Please only utilize [Approved Online Resources](#)

### B. Communication and Virtual Meetings

- a. Educators are asked to **check their CPS email at the start and close of each weekday** for updates and communications from their school administration and district leaders.
- b. Educators are asked to participate as able in virtual staff meetings held by school or district leaders to receive key updates and/or engage in necessary collaboration to support student learning.

Messages can be sent to students/families via Aspen, Google classroom, district email, Remind - whichever communication platform the educator regularly uses. Please share your messages with your principal, OSS Coordinator, and Deans.

Activities may be educator-created or drawn from the [CPS Distance Learning Guidelines for Educators](#) and [CPS Distance Learning Resources Google Site](#) developed by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction. The Office of Student Services has also included resources to support access to the content. Educators are expected to check the Google docs/resources page periodically for updates and additional resources.

We also encourage educators to also reach out directly and individually to students who may have a particularly difficult time during this school closure period. As we think about centering our values of equity even during this difficult time, consider the needs of students who have greater needs and what you can do to provide them with more support and encouragement.

### C. Grade-level Expectations During the Emergency School Closure Period

- a. **JK - 2nd Grade**
  - i. "Homeroom Teachers" are asked at minimum to send a daily class message to parents and caregivers with simple messages to pass on to students and suggestions for learning and enrichment experiences in which the students can engage (e.g. question of the day, ideas for extensions to school learning or projects). See [CPS Distance Learning Resources](#) for ideas.
  - ii. Specialists, interventionists, and general education social workers are asked to send a message to parents/caregivers of the students with whom they work at





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least once per week to maintain relational connection and suggest learning and enrichment activities that are appropriate for their respective content areas and grade levels.

- iii. Paraprofessionals/Instructional Aides should work with their classroom teacher colleague to plan for additional outreach to students and families.
- iv. All educators are asked to check their CPS email and other student/family engagement tools at the start and close of each work day for updates and communications from their school/district administration and to respond to student and family messages.
- v. Educators are asked to participate as able in virtual staff meetings held by school or district leaders to receive key updates and/or engage in necessary collaboration to support student learning.

### b. 3rd - 5th Grade

- i. "Homeroom Teachers" are asked at minimum to send a daily class message to students (and their parents/caregivers) with greetings and suggestions for learning and enrichment experiences in which the students can engage. (e.g. question of the day, ideas for extensions to school learning or projects). See [CPS Distance Learning Resources](#) for ideas.
- ii. Specialists, interventionists, and general education social workers are asked to send a message to students (and their parents/caregivers) at least once per week to maintain relational connection and suggest learning and enrichment activities that are appropriate for their respective content areas and grade levels.
- iii. Paraprofessionals/Instructional Aides should work with their classroom teacher colleague to plan for additional outreach to students and families.
- iv. All educators are asked to check their CPS email and other student/family engagement tools at the start and close of each work day for updates and communications from their school/district administration and to respond to student and family messages.
- v. Educators are asked to participate as able in virtual staff meetings held by school or district leaders to receive key updates and/or engage in necessary collaboration to support student learning.

### c. 6th - 8th Grade

- i. Core teachers are asked to send communications to the students with whom they work at least once per day to maintain relational connection and communicate specific lessons and activities for their respective subjects/courses. See [CPS Distance Learning Resources](#) for ideas.
- ii. "Advisory" teachers, specialists, interventionists, and general education social workers/ guidance counselors are asked to send a regular class message at least twice per week to their students to check in on their progress and overall well-being--and to offer encouragement and ideas for staying engaged and healthy (e.g. reflection/journal prompt, mindfulness strategies).



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- iii. Paraprofessionals/Instructional Aides should work with their classroom teacher colleague to plan for additional outreach to students and families.
- iv. All educators are asked to check their CPS email and other student/family engagement tools at the start and close of each work day for updates and communications from their school/district administration and to respond to student and family messages.
- v. Educators are asked to participate as able in virtual staff meetings held by school or district leaders to receive key updates and/or engage in necessary collaboration to support student learning.

### d. 9th - 12th Grade

- i. Core teachers, counselors, direct service providers, and others are asked to send communications to the students with whom they work at least once per day to maintain relational connection and communicate specific lessons and activities for their respective subjects/courses.
- ii. See [CRLS Distance Learning Resources](#) website for tech tools and resources for communicating with parents and students.
- iii. "Community Meeting" Teachers are asked to send a class message to their students at least twice per week to continue a sense of community and check in on how students are doing.
- iv. Paraprofessionals/Instructional Aides should work with their classroom teacher colleague to plan for additional outreach to students and families.
- v. All educators are asked to check their CPS email and other student/family engagement tools at the start and close of each work day for updates and communications from their school/district administration and to respond to student and family messages.
- vi. Educators are asked to participate as able in virtual staff meetings held by school or district leaders to receive key updates and/or engage in necessary collaboration to support student learning.

### D. OSS Staff

- a. **By Friday, March 27, 2020**, Special Educators/Related Service Providers **must write and send via US mail or email IEP progress reports** to families about students' progress to date and the work they've done to achieve their IEP goals.
- b. During the emergency school closure, all special educators (i.e., Special Start, sub separate, post-grade ASD) will communicate weekly (via email) with families to get an update on the following:
  - i. How are they accessing enrichment activities as outlined on the [CPS Distance Learning site](#)? (Please note: There are additional resources for OSS families on the CPS website).
  - ii. How will they continue to engage in enrichment activities as outlined on the CPS Distance Learning site?





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- iii. Special educators who work in **grades 6-12** and provide services primarily as a co-teacher should consult weekly with their general educators to make sure shared activities are accessible. Please digitally keep track of your consult time.
  - iv. Staff **must** document and log all communication in EasyIEP.
  - v. If you are unable to make contact with the parents/guardians this week, please complete this [form](#) to let us know.
  - vi. School Psychologists must be available to consult with their Team members weekly.
  - vii. Related Service Providers will work remotely with Margie Carlman to pre-populate learning activities for their discipline area weekly.
  - viii. Related Service Providers will consult with their sub-separate and pre-school teachers as deemed necessary.
  - ix. Related Services Providers are expected to complete the "Plans of Care." You will need your evaluation information and access to EasyIEP. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Margie Carlman at [mcarlman@cpsd.us](mailto:mcarlman@cpsd.us).
- c. School Adjustment Counselors/Social Workers **are required** to make weekly contact with vulnerable students and families and document weekly communication in EasyIEP. If you become aware that the lengthy emergency school closing will present a potential safety issue for a student, please contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and notify your OSS Supervisor.
- d. **For all OSS Unit A Staff:**
- i. If you have recently completed an assessment, please make sure that the report is finalized by **April 7, 2020**.
  - ii. If you have participated in an IEP meeting prior to the closure, please make sure that your portion of the IEP is completed by **April 7, 2020**.
  - iii. Additionally, for assessments in progress, please add information to the appropriate sections of the IEP. Please be reminded that this information will need to be discussed and reviewed at the IEP meeting and updated following the IEP meetings that occur when school is back in session.
  - iv. All OSS staff are required to follow district protocol for checking email. Additionally, OSS staff are expected to respond to all family emails and notify your OSS supervisor if you feel it requires a district-level response.