



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720
978-264-4700
www.abschools.org

Peter J. Light
Superintendent of Schools

To: Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee
From: Peter Light, Superintendent of Schools
Date: April 8, 2020
RE: School Closure Update

When we closed on March 12, we did so with the understanding that we would be closed for one, or possibly two weeks. Since that time, we have seen Governor Baker extend our closure until May 4. Additionally, the Commissioner of Education has released updated guidelines for school districts' remote learning plans, and we have gained a deeper understanding of ways we can support students and families during this closure.

This past Monday, April 6, we launched our updated distance learning plans which provide greater opportunities for students with regard to structure, social-emotional connections, and access to activities to help students maintain and appropriately grow skills and content while away from school. As we launched these plans, we heard information feedback from families suggesting that we continue educational efforts during the regularly scheduled April Vacation.

This week, we engaged in a process to solicit feedback from educators and families around preferences for April Vacation. The ABEA surveyed educators across the district and supports continuing educational efforts during the April Vacation week. We also surveyed families and as of 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 8, we have received 2,780 responses to our survey. Results of the survey indicate that 82.4% of families prefer to continue education efforts in lieu of having April Vacation, and 17.6% would prefer to keep April Vacation as scheduled.

On Friday, April 3, Jeff Riley, Commissioner of Education released guidance to schools around April Vacation. In its guidance, DESE made clear that the decision to cancel April Vacation is a local decision. And that *"Each school committee or public school board of trustees establishes the school year schedule for its schools, consistent with state standards outlined in the Student Learning Time regulations. Within those standards, the school committee or board may adjust the school calendar to meet the needs of its community, subject to collective bargaining as applicable."* The guidance further stated that *"In the On the Desktop message, 'Coronavirus Updates on 180-Day Requirement and More,' dated March 10, I stated that the longest any school district would be required to go in the current school year is its scheduled 185th day, although a district could decide to go longer. If a school district continues providing its remote learning program for students from April 21 to 24, the district is not required to go beyond its previously scheduled 181st day. Districts that maintain the April vacation week as a school vacation will be expected to resume their remote learning program on April 27 and conclude the school year no earlier than the previously scheduled 185th day."*

Our administration proposes that we amend the FY20 school calendar to cancel the April Vacation and continue to provide educational services during this time. Monday, April 20 is a state-wide holiday and there will be no education activities on that day. Distance learning would take place Tuesday, April 21-Friday April 24. Similar to other weeks in our distance learning plan, students would have synchronous contact with teachers Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of that week and would not be required to work in a synchronous learning environment on Friday.

To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.

Currently, our last scheduled (185th) day of school is Tuesday, June 23. If we make the proposed change, our last scheduled (181st) day of school will be Wednesday, June 17.

I would also request that you provide me with flexibility to work with ABRHS Principal Dorey to provide flexibility for our current seniors at the end of this school year, as the school closure and this possible calendar change is likely to impact them the greatest.

Thank you for your consideration.

Recommended Action: Move that the ABRSC amend the FY20 school calendar to cancel April Vacation, subject to collective bargaining, in order to provide greater educational continuity during the school closure.