

April 1, 2020 Town Newsletter

What a roller coaster we have all been on over the past few weeks!

On March 2nd we sent our first correspondence to families with some precautionary steps that we were taking in our schools, and offered some suggestions for staff and families to put into place to keep themselves and their families healthy and safe during these uncertain times. A few short weeks later, on March 13th, we announced to our school staff the postponement of all field trips, the suspension of all outside visitors entering our buildings, and the halting of all in-house performances, as some of our ongoing steps to protect our staff and students from COVID-19. As things rapidly progressed in both our nation and our state, only 24 hours later (March 14), we declared that we would be closing our schools until at least March 20th, and less than 24 hours after that (March 15), the decision was made to close schools until at least March 27th and move to distance learning beginning on Monday, March 23rd. Since this date and in conjunction with area southern Maine superintendents, the school closure date has been extended to at least April 27th.

In order to prepare for distance learning, several components had to get in place. Although all of our students – kindergarten through seniors – have a school issued computer device, only students in the middle school and high school are allowed to bring their devices outside of their schools. Therefore, our IT Department had to create a plan to swiftly gather and distribute devices to our youngest students. On Wednesday, March 18 and again on Saturday, March 21, over 1,000 devices were dispersed to families in need of a device in order to keep families connected and ready for distance learning. Also, our IT Department created a website for students to find their distance learning assignments and for any updates that are communicated to staff and families (<https://sites.google.com/a/scarboroughschools.org/sps/covid19>). While our IT Department has been working around the clock to get these pieces in place, our school staff has been doing an amazing job to get their lessons prepared and on this website for students to access. All staff has been working diligently and promptly to meet the needs of their students and to get their lessons on line. They have gone above and beyond in these challenging times, while many are also juggling the demands of distance learning for their own children.

As we come to the end of March (which came in like a lamb and is going out like a lion!) and turn the calendar to April – we will continue to keep our Scarborough community updated and informed on what our upcoming plans are and when we feel it is safe to reopen our schools. Our distance learning will remain for students, and our staff will be revising their learning strategies as necessary. From all of us at Scarborough Public Schools, thank you for your continued support, patience and understating as we all navigate through these unprecedented and difficult times. Stay healthy and be well.