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**MOLLIE O'KEEFE, MBA, MSF**  
Executive Director of Finance and Operations

March 13, 2020

**Re: COVID-19 Update #7a**

Dear SAU 16 Parents and Guardians:

We are writing to provide you with more information about our proactive two week closure of SAU 16 offices and school buildings and subsequent move to remote learning.

As we previously indicated in today's earlier email about building closures in SAU 16, this action is a local decision that was made using available research through the NH Department of Health and Human Services and Center for Disease Control, and in consultation with Exeter Hospital, Core Physicians, and school leadership. We believe our role as a community partner at this time is to work collaboratively with our medical and public health partners to best address the current needs of those who live, work, and play in the greater Exeter area. The greatest impact that we can have as a partner is the enforcement of social distancing, and while we understand the significant disruption this causes, we believe it is better to be proactive now than reactive later.

**All students will continue with their learning.** School principals and classroom teachers have been preparing, assembling, and sharing a multitude of learning activities and opportunities for instructional continuity to take place while the buildings are closed. The most important factor to consider is that it will not look like the type of learning that you are used to seeing as the NH State Board of Education passed an emergency rule on March 12 allowing remote instruction as each school district "sees fit". Our expectation is that students will participate earnestly in these creative and innovative activities so that they can continue a learning routine while they are at home, and teachers will be in routine contact with students throughout the remote learning period. Equitable learning opportunities will be provided in observance of individual learning needs, technology accessibility, and learning support.

**All students should maintain some type of routine schedule.** In order to stave off social isolation and the effects it has on mental wellness, work with your child to maintain a routine for learning. For example, have them wake up at a reasonable hour in the morning, attend to learning through the morning, allow some play time and scheduled time for lunch, and then return to some learning during the early afternoon. However you structure it, work with your child to stay on a schedule. Further, encourage video chats and phone calls with friends and relatives to help keep their social senses robust.

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Each graduate demonstrates engaged learning and citizenship through the ability to solve problems independently and collaboratively with perseverance and resilience, and communicates solutions with confidence and empathy.

**Students who require assistance with meals will be served.** We are working with ERCSD Food Services Director Jeanne Pierce, End 68 Hours of Hunger, and other local vendors to help address the absence of regular breakfast and lunches for our over 600 students who qualify for meal assistance. We are so fortunate to have received inquiries from local business owners and other professionals seeking ways to help us address this issue, and we will be in touch with more details about the logistics of a temporary distribution program.

**The SAU office will be staffed remotely.** All SAU office personnel will begin working remotely on Monday, March 16. Further, all tenants of the Tuck Learning Campus have been informed of the building closure and therefore will not be open for business. Please continue to communicate via email with any member of the SAU central office staff that you would normally contact for questions about SAU operations, and please contact your school principal for specific, school-related issues and questions.

**All SAU buildings will be inaccessible.** Our school facilities staff will be performing deep cleans of all of our schools using available electrostatic sanitizers, disinfectants, and other tools to ensure that students and staff will return to a thoroughly scrubbed school or office. In order to accomplish this task, you may find upon arrival at any of our buildings a sign on our doors expressing this sentiment. Please observe these signs and allow our staff to properly treat the buildings without interruption.

**All questions regarding the impact COVID-19 has on SAU16 should continue to be sent to [dryan@sau16.org](mailto:dryan@sau16.org).** Please direct your questions about this action, impact on the school year, and other related items to the Superintendent. It is asked that you reserve those questions until March 16 so that the transition to remote learning can be the primary order of business over the weekend.

As of now our target date for return is Monday, March 30, and all of our SAU 16 offices and schools will be closed and not accessible by anyone except for our maintenance staff. We will be in constant contact with all of our families and staff through the period of remote learning with updates and recommendations, and we will certainly work to provide ample notification should our return date change.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



David Ryan, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



Kristen Johnson, M.D.  
SAU 16 Consulting Physician  
Core Physicians, Division of Pediatrics

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