

March 16, 2020

Dear CLCS Families,

In order to support families during this extended period of school closure, we wanted to provide families with important resources related to access to learning, food, and the internet. Please see below for more information. Conservatory Lab will continue to be in regular communication with families through ParentSquare during this period with any updates or additional resources that may be helpful to families.

Thank you,  
CLCS

## **1. Online Learning Activities**

We are reaching out with resources on how you can support your student(s) at home to continue their learning. We know this time can be both confusing and overwhelming for students, and we're hoping that providing some consistency in learning can help students cope with this change in routine. It will take everyone involved in our students' lives to support them and we're confident that our students will rise to this task.

Teachers and administrators have developed a document called [Family Resource CLCS Online Learning Platforms](#) outlining several alternative learning options, both digital and traditional, that students and families can access at home. Most at home learning materials are available via a computer, tablet, or cell phone. Comcast is now offering free internet service for the next 60 days for individuals that do not currently have access. You may contact Comcast directly to arrange service (see below for more information)

The CLCS Online Learning Platforms resource is just a list of options that we currently have available. As additional options are vetted by our teachers, we will add them to the document. Over the next few days we will be working with classroom teachers on grade-level specific learning options.

As always, the most important piece of learning for students is independent reading for **30 - 90 minutes per day**, every day. Remember, "Reading is Thinking." Homeroom teachers will be sharing all relevant usernames and passwords for your student to access the applications.

Now that your child will be home all day with you, it is important to establish new routines and expectations for this time. Children are accustomed to free time on weekends and summer vacation. This is not the same. First, there should not be any play dates or get-togethers during this time. Discuss the meaning and purpose of social distancing with children to help them understand that they should not be visiting with friends or family, as anyone can infect another person without showing any symptoms. When creating a home schedule for your household consider all of the things your child

might be doing over the course of the day. Consider splitting up stationary activities with more active activities. Take a break after reading and doing some math to clean your room or help with laundry. Allocate activities in 15-30 minute increments based on children's age. Don't forget play time or free time as well. Decide on a reasonable amount of screen time in your household, consider differentiating educational screen time versus entertainment. A sample family schedule is posted [here](#) and can serve as a guide as you create your own.

If you have medical-specific questions, please contact your primary care physician or the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) at the Mayor's Healthline, 617-534-5050.

## **2. Food Access for Boston Students**

BPS will continue to provide free breakfast and lunch meals to all Boston students. This includes our community based early childhood provider students, charters, Metco, and Catholic parochial schools. BPS will distribute the meals at several dozen locations throughout the City of Boston beginning on Tuesday, March 17. A variety of packaged meal options will be available for pick-up Monday - Friday from 8:30 am - 11:30 am. Visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org/coronavirus](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/coronavirus) for the full list. No child will be turned away.

Additionally, the City of Boston in partnership with Project Bread, YMCA of Greater Boston, Boston Centers for Youth and Families, and other community organizations will also be providing free meals to school-aged children at various locations and times across the city. [Click here](#) to view all the current meal locations and times. More locations will become available over the coming week.

The City of Boston has created pick up sites available throughout the city for families to access food. This is similar to the plan during used during summer recess. You may review the [map](#) of available sites and share with families that you know may be in greatest need. This information will be sent out to all families.

## **3. Boston Internet Access**

Comcast is offering free service during this time that everyone needs access to digital information. Please see information from Comcast below (you may contact them directly to arrange service) [or read their corporate announcement here](#):

- **Xfinity WiFi Free For Everyone:** Xfinity WiFi hotspots across the country will be available to anyone who needs them for free – including non-Xfinity Internet subscribers. For a map of Xfinity WiFi hotspots, visit [www.xfinity.com/wifi](http://www.xfinity.com/wifi). Once at a hotspot, consumers should select the "xfinitywifi" network name in the list of available hotspots and then launch a browser.
- **Pausing Our Data Plan:** With so many people working and educating from home, we want our customers to access the internet without thinking about data plans. While the vast majority of

our customers do not come close to using 1TB of data in a month, we are pausing our data plans for 60 days giving all customers Unlimited data for no additional charge.

- **No Disconnects or Late Fees:** We will not disconnect a customer's internet service or assess late fees if they contact us and let us know that they can't pay their bills during this period. Our care teams will be available to offer flexible payment options and can help find other solutions.
- **Internet Essentials Free to New Customers:** As announced yesterday, it's even easier for low-income families who live in a Comcast service area to sign-up for Internet Essentials, the nation's largest and most comprehensive broadband adoption program. New customers will receive 60 days of complimentary Internet Essentials service, which is normally available to all qualified low-income households for \$9.95/month. Additionally, for all new and existing Internet Essentials customers, the speed of the program's Internet service was increased to 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream. That increase will go into effect for no additional fee and it will become the new base speed for the program going forward.

#### **4. Additional Reminders**

CLCS have sent instruments home with as many 1st - 8th grade students as possible as well as Chromebooks home with as many students in Gr. 3-8 as possible so that students may continue to access learning from home. We ask that families take the time to review the Instrument Agreement and the Chromebook Agreement with their students regularly, to ensure responsible use of these items during school closure. Copies of the agreements are attached to this email.