



## Distance Learning Academy News

September 29, 2020

Dear DLA Families,

“WE MADE IT THROUGH OUR FIRST WEEK!!! Challenging. Exhausting. Confusing. Rewarding. Joyful. Funny! These are just some of the many words that I would use to describe this past week.”

Above is a message sent to families by a third grade teacher at the end of last week. I think it sums up nicely all of the feelings I have had over the past week as well. I am guessing many of you can relate. While there were many successes, we also have more work to do around technology, ease of schedule and communication. We are continuing to think about ways to improve the student and family experiences and expect to make several adjustments going forward.

### **Updates:**

#### • *Small Group Supports:*

All of the elementary principals are currently working together to schedule general education supports for students in both the hybrid and DLA programs. These include literacy and math interventions for students identified as needing additional support. Small group sessions will be incorporated into the schedules on mornings when the students are not scheduled to work with the general education teacher. Home-School staff will lead most, but not all, of these sessions. We are in the midst of identifying needs and scheduling for this complex puzzle. Start dates will vary based on the unique staffing availability in each school; this process could take a couple of weeks. Schools will alert families of students whose needs warrant participation.

#### • *Student Devices:*

There have been many requests for devices by families in DLA who did not submit requests for the initial distribution round. If there are families who have an immediate need (do not have alternative, home devices that can be used), send a note to [ftsupport@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:ftsupport@newton.k12.ma.us) to request one now. The IT department is expecting all iPad orders to arrive this week and chromebook orders in the coming weeks. Devices will be distributed to ALL students as shipments arrive and are processed regardless of whether or not the device was initially requested.

• *Learning Platforms:*

We are excited to see so many teachers and students fully integrated into Seesaw at the K-3 levels and Google Classroom for 4th and 5th graders. These platforms offer a one-stop spot to retrieve assignments and resources. Teachers are building out schedules and adding links and assignments more and more each day. It is exciting to see how they are being used to engage students in dynamic online learning.

• *Supplies:*

Round 1 in September: As you know, the first round of supplies were distributed by the home schools two weeks ago. The intent was to provide students in the DLA with a general set of supplies, the same as what is available to hybrid students in the classroom. We are aware that there were some discrepancies between what was provided. This is due to the fact that NPS does not centrally order general supplies. For several schools, supplies were limited to what was in storerooms at the time, since many items were backordered.

Round 2 Distribution, anticipated in October (tentative Oct. 7-9): Additional general supplies that have arrived in schools will be bagged. Schools are tracking what was already sent home and back ordered, so that parity is established across schools. In addition, Round 2 will include curricular content materials. A list is being readied for staff, schools and families, and your Home School will publish your school's distribution date. We anticipate monthly distributions based on forthcoming curricular units.

**Looking Ahead:**

The teachers and administrators are planning four events for next week, two in the morning and two in the evening. Although they will be geared towards the particular grades, you are welcome to attend any of the sessions. We are also planning on recording one or more of the sessions for those who are unable to attend.

The focus will be on "How to support your student with organization and engagement in online learning." In order to make these sessions meaningful to you, please enter any questions related to this topic in this [Google form](#). This will help us to tailor the sessions to address your questions and concerns. We understand there may be other questions you have, so we are linking the [FAQ document](#) that may be able to help.

Tues. October 6th, 8:30 - 9:15am, Families of K-3 Students

Tues. October 6th, 7:30 - 8:15pm, Families of K-3 Students

Thurs. October 8th, 8:30 - 9:15am, Families of 4-5 Students

Thurs. October 8th, 7:30 - 8:15pm, Families of 4-5 Students

[Zoom link](#) for all four webinars, Passcode- **DLA**

**TENTATIVE AGENDA**

- \*DLA Update (10 mins)**
- \*Strategies for Student Engagement (15 mins)**
- \*Questions/Answers (20 mins)**

Mon. October 12th, Indigenous Peoples/Columbus Day, NO SCHOOL

We appreciate all that you are doing in the home to support your student's education. We look forward to growing our partnership with you as we all work to create the best distance learning experience possible for DLA students.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Shore, DLA Principal  
Kristen Conrad, DLA Assistant Principal  
Maura Morse, DLA Assistant Principal