



June 19, 2020

Dear Excel Families,

It is increasingly clear that we are living through a historic time - one of great uncertainty, and also one which holds the promise of profound change. I want to extend my sincere congratulations to you for finishing a school year like no other and to thank you for your continued partnership and resilience in light of the unique challenges we are facing as a community. I wish you all a relaxing and very well earned summer break.

I also want to take a moment to share a few important updates as we transition into the summer and plan for the fall.

Summer 2020 Resources

I would like to remind you of important resources that will continue to be available to your family this summer. Additional resources and reminders are also provided on the last page of this letter.

Please take a look at our Excel Counseling website and Instagram (Excel Be Well). Here you can access a variety of resources including information on managing stress, mental health and well being, and self-care. sites.google.com/view/excelcounseling/

Benefits Access - Summer Support: Excel Academy offers free and confidential assistance to our families in a variety of areas, including information related to immigration services and access to benefits like health insurance and SNAP. Call 617-466-9384 to speak with the Excel Academy Benefits Access Team about health insurance, SNAP, or any other questions. You may also submit a request for assistance form. www.excelacademy.org/request-assistance-form/

Meal Distribution:

- Through June 26 families can pick up multiple days of meals at Excel Academy Chelsea or Excel Academy Charter High School Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 10am – 12pm.
- *From June 30 to August 31 meals will be available 10AM – 12PM on Tuesday and Thursday.*
- If you need help locating food providers closer to your home, please reach out to Estevan Puerta at 617-466-9384 (Estevan speaks English and Spanish).

P-EBT Update: Many families continue to struggle with using their cards. Families need the last 4 digits of the Case Number to PIN the card. Many families did not get or do not have the letter now.

Good news! DTA has created a portal (dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/PEBT) where you can immediately get your child's Case Number by entering your child's P-EBT card number. Please note that the first 10-digits are pre-populated. You should only enter the last 8-digits of your 18-digit P-EBT card. Information on how to PIN the P-EBT card once you have your child's Case Number is available from Project Bread in English, Spanish, and Portuguese (www.projectbread.org/news-and-events/news/pandemic-ebt-instructions-to.html). Additional



resources can be found here (www.map-ebt.org/). The portal is now available in the following languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and Vietnamese. You can select your language preference using the drop-down menu on the top right-hand side of the screen.

Planning for School Year 2020-2021

As we look toward the start of the 2020-2021 School Year in August, it is clear we will not be returning to “business as normal” when we return to school. Like all school districts in Massachusetts, we are waiting for information to be released by the state Department of Education to confirm the parameters in which we’ll be operating this coming school year.

Even while waiting for guidance from the Department of Education, Excel Academy leadership is working to determine adjustments we’ll need to take to ensure we can deliver the best educational opportunities for your student in a safe and healthy environment. **I want to share with you below the values and philosophy that drives our work as we prepare for the coming year, and also ask for your input via a family survey:** <https://forms.gle/7HZys5rqrK4ZwPNw9>.

Depending on the guidance released by the Department of Education, we may need to make some shifts to our academic and program model and we are preparing contingencies for that now. I want to share with you our values and philosophy that drives how we design these solutions:

- **Health and safety:** Excel Academy prioritizes the health and safety of all community members, and is committed to following the most up-to-date guidance on health and safety practices. While no one can eliminate the risk of illness in an in-person learning setting, we will communicate transparently with families about the steps we will take to reduce risks. Excel understands that some students and families may have elevated risk of serious illness and may need remote learning options even after school opens for in-person learning, and we commit to providing that option for those who need it.
- **Academics:** Excel Academy knows the value our families place on college-preparatory academics. We commit to providing our students with challenging, grade-level academic opportunities, even as we work with our students to fill in gaps due to lost school time this spring.
- **Student Supports:** Excel Academy knows the importance of supports that allow all our students to succeed with challenging academics. We are working to ensure that strong supports will be in place for students with special needs throughout the coming year.
- **Joy and community:** Excel Academy knows that students need to experience joy and community to continue being invested in school. We are working to restore this and provide students a re-entry to school that is warm, supportive, and re-establishes relationships.
- **Flexibility:** The impact of COVID-19 on our school environment is likely to continue to evolve throughout the 2020-2021 School Year. Excel Academy commits to being flexible to meet these



changes and will continue to adjust programming and operations to provide the best education for our students even as we navigate the changes to come.

Our preparation for the coming school year will be incomplete without family input as we develop potential plans. **Please provide your thoughts via this family survey by 5PM on Friday, June 26:** <https://forms.gle/7HZys5rqrK4ZwPNw9>.

Even as we prepare for the coming 2020-2021 School Year, Excel Academy is supporting our teachers and students in several other ways.

Next month, we will launch robust summer programming offerings that will be delivered virtually for middle school students and in-person for high school students.

Excel Academy leadership are working to prepare for staff training starting in early August so that teachers will be ready to greet and implement a great education for your child on the first day of school.

Excel operations staff are reviewing our building systems to ensure a healthy environment for our community - taking measures such as increasing ventilation of our facilities, creating plans for staff and students to be socially distanced while moving through the school buildings, and increasing the frequency of disinfection of surfaces in our buildings.

Finally, please click here to view the 2020-2021 school calendar:

www.excelacademy.org/academic-calendars/. Because we do not yet know the full extent of how COVID-19 may affect the coming school year, we will revisit and revise this calendar by early August. At this time, the planned first day of school for your student is as follows:

- New students at middle schools: August 25th
- Returning students at middle schools: August 27th
- All 9th grade students: August 25th
- All 10th-12th grade students: August 28th

We very much look forward to serving your child in the coming year, and will continue to stay in touch as plans for the 2020-2021 School Year become more clear.

Please be safe, and thank you as always,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Owen".

CEO, Excel Academy Charter Schools



Important Reminders:

- **Excel Academy COVID-19 Updates:** www.excelacademy.org/coronavirusupdates/
- **City of Chelsea COVID-19 Updates:** www.chelseama.gov/coronavirusupdates
- **City of Boston COVID-19 Updates:** www.boston.gov/news/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-boston

What to do if you are sick? Your doctor is the best person to speak with if you believe you may have been exposed to or may be sick from COVID-19. There is an extensive healthcare network in place, and your doctor is an important part of it. If you are experiencing coronavirus symptoms including **fever, sore throat, cough, runny nose, muscle aches, shortness of breath or loss of smell**, your doctor may advise that you get tested. You may also contact these trusted healthcare organizations in the community.

- **East Boston Neighborhood Health Center (EBNHC):**
 - **COVID-19 testing is now available for anyone at EBNHC, even if you do not have symptoms.** Call 617-569-5800 to register. Tests are available 7 days per week at the drive-through at Suffolk Downs, the walk-in clinic at 79 Paris St., or the emergency department if you are sick.
 - You can also call your primary care physician at EBNHC to request mobile routine vaccinations or prescription delivery.
- **Massachusetts General Hospital Chelsea (MGH Chelsea):** Call 617-724-7000.
 - Information in English: www.massgeneral.org/news/coronavirus
 - Information in Spanish: www.massgeneral.org/es/coronavirus

Testing and treatment for COVID-19 related symptoms is available at EBNHC and MGH Chelsea regardless of immigration status, health insurance, or ability to pay.

Local Financial Support and Community Assistance:

Chelsea Collaborative: www.chelseacollab.org/

- The One Chelsea Fund will be providing direct financial support to Chelsea families who have been impacted by COVID-19, and the Chelsea Collaborative is one of the organizations helping get money to families. They are also looking for volunteers to help deliver food and other necessities, for those who have the ability to do so.

Mutual Aid East Boston: whatsupeastie.com/coronavirusresponse/mutualaideastie/

- Connecting individuals to existing networks of support in the East Boston community to maximize mutual aid.

United Way: unitedwaymassbay.org/covid-19/get-help/

- Individuals who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 crisis can find assistance through United Way's 2-1-1 service.

City Life Vida Urbana: www.clvu.org/covid19

- Call the hotline (English 617-934-5006; Spanish 617-397-3773) for assistance with housing resources.