

**April 6, 2020**

## **Update**

Dear Preston Learning Community,

We will no longer use this space to provide statistics we hear on the news every day regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. It is sufficed to say that we are entering a tough time and our will, love, respect, and care for one another is what will bring us to the other side, ready to move forward with hope and assurance into the future. We will, of course, post significant policy shifts.

Please accept our sincere appreciation for the astounding amount of work and transition families, students, and staff has achieved in our first few weeks of moving to an entirely virtual learning environment. We are very aware that there are some challenges embedded in the social reconstruction of schooling. Every day we make adjustments based on the collaborative sharing of insights, learnings, and experiences we each experience. Continued communication is crucial for our success. We have achieved 99% connectivity with all students. Well done, everybody!

We continue with meal distribution – averaging between 200 to 300 lunches and breakfast per day. We have also distributed over 30 Chromebooks to families in need. It is with mutual commitment and respect that we will continue to transform and grow. We will continue to post updates on Facebook, our webpage, and Blackboard connect messages.

As a reminder, we will be taking Spring break, which begins on Friday, April 10th. The last day of the school year remains Thursday, June 18, 2020.

As you know, in previous announcements, we have reminded everyone of online etiquette. Thank you for following those simple rules. Additionally, we advise, to the best of your ability, to provide a quiet place for students to work independently online and offline. Support your students working independently and also allow time for breaks, rest, relaxation, family activities, and moments of disconnecting from the screens of our virtual learning environment. Routine engagement in learning matters, but it should not routinely overwhelm our learners.

Encourage your child to complete their work independently as they would in the traditional classroom setting.

In the spirit of we are - Not Unemployed, We are Redeploying - the next steps regarding bus drivers are described below.

Our drivers are participating in virtual training. The district also has to keep the busses in motion, so drivers are going to maintain social distance and have developed a rotation below. The need to keep buses in motion we hope will also help our students and families that we are here, and we will be returning to a normal routine in the future.

Starting next week, On Monday, April 6th, 2020, Preston drivers will be driving their Elementary AM Bus routes from 8 to 8:30 am. The district is required to maintain bus vehicle readiness and as part of that program, the buses must be driven. We thought that since this is a requirement we would use this opportunity to connect with students. The drivers are observing all social distancing requirements.

If students would like to be outside at the identified times, they could wave “Hi” to their drivers as they pass by. Monday, April 6th, bus routes 17, 19, and 20 will be on the road between 8 and 8:30 AM. On Tuesday, April 7th, 2020, drivers of bus routes, 13, 16, and 18, will come by from 8 to 8:30 am. On Wednesday, April 8th, 2020 would be bus routes 14, 15 and 23, 27 from 8 to 8:30 am.

As we move forward, we will publish more activities for students. Also, looking to the future, all of our staff are exploring ways to maintain the treasured connection we all have with our students. We are creating virtual experiences for families, staff and students to enjoy, including a Virtual Parade and opportunities to listen to staff reading to students. Dr. Ann Perzan, Director of Special Education, invites children and families to send photos, artwork, poems, or stories to her email as she will be recording events as we learn, grow, and work through these trying times.

Be kind. Be engaged. Be strong. Be safe. Be well.

***Roy M. Seitsinger, Jr., Ph.D.***  
***Superintendent of Schools***