



April 2, 2020

Dear Elementary Parents and Guardians,

Since the Governor mandated the closure of all schools, Berrien Springs Public Schools teachers have made an exemplary effort to provide all students with a variety of learning opportunities. Secondary teachers have the capability of providing remote learning opportunities to students in grades 6-12 due to existing technology and digital learning platforms needed to support digital learning. Elementary teachers have not had the same capability required to support remote learning for elementary students in grades preK-5.

In place of remote learning, Mars and Sylvester Elementary teachers have relied on traditional paper and pencil learning packets, their individual ingenuity and creativity, and have maintained a focus on regular personal contact with students. Governor Whitmer announced in Executive Order No. 2020-35 that schools would be closed for the remainder of the school year unless restrictions on public gatherings and use of school buildings are lifted before the end of the 2019-2020 school year. In preparation for an extended school closure our elementary teachers, technology staff and principals have been preparing to transition to remote learning for all elementary students. In preparation of this transition, the following is a list of some of the activities elementary staff have been engaged in:

1. Meeting regularly on Google Hangouts to collaborate around what can it look like to provide **new** learning remotely.
2. Contacting all families to:
 - Determine the extent of internet accessibility during the school day (available, not available, limited).
 - Determine the level of adult support for school work during the school day (every day, every day but not during school hours, not at all).
 - Determine preferences around curriculum delivery (paper/pencil, virtual/digital, blended).
 - Identifying any resources families need (Chromebook, internet, food, personal hygiene, school supplies).
3. Studying best practices for E-learning and Remote learning.
4. Collaborating as grade level teams with curriculum coaches on identifying the most essential standards for the next 8 weeks.
5. Exploring the use of hyperdocs, as shared by Middle School teacher Emma Haygood, as a user-friendly school wide template for providing families with flexible learning tasks a week at a time. We desire to provide a predictable format for our families so that we can control one variable.
6. Considering what an equitable paper pencil version of remote learning could look like and procedures for getting students/families access to these materials.

The district is planning to make remote learning available to elementary students the week of April 13th. The district's Technology Department is currently working on a plan for the distribution of electronic devices to elementary students. The district understands that not every family has Internet access or high-speed Internet service. For those students without access to remote learning, teachers are preparing new learning packets. All of these steps are being implemented to support the ongoing learning needs of all our students through the end of the school year if necessary.

Our district staff remains committed to meeting the needs of our students and families during this very challenging and uncertain time. It is an honor for our staff to continue serving and supporting you and your children throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. You can expect additional communication with the specific details about this and any future plans as we continue to support the learning needs of all our students.

Sincerely,



David Eichberg, Superintendent



Dee Voss, Mars Elementary Principal



Amy Williams, Sylvester Elementary Principal