



March 15, 2020

Hilliard Education Family,

With Dr. Amy Acton's official order to close all public schools through at least April 3, 2020, the Hilliard City Schools are prepared to launch eLearning. We are building this platform for the long haul; we are building it to last. All indications are the present-day school closing order will be extended well beyond the current April 3, 2020 date. Governor DeWine shared today on several news outlets. "It is very possible schools will be shut down for the year."

Before I share details about the next couple of days, I am compelled to speak to some issues that have created division over the past month. During my listening tour, it was evident that, we can all communicate better, and we need to partner at a higher level. We've been working to resolve some of our secondary issues; I am about halfway through the elementary visits as of last week. Here is my commitment to each of you; we will address these issues once we get through this crisis. I will not forget your concerns; I will not permit

the COVID-19 situation to stop our work together. We will continue the work on student-iPads at the secondary level, final exam schedules, iPad limitations, special education support, and several other issues.

In a crisis, we come together to serve our students; in crisis, we come together as an education family. We are ONE HILLIARD. As President John F. Kennedy shared, "we recognize that what unites us is greater than what divides us." The Hilliard City School District is exceptionally well prepared for eLearning. Our work over the past five years, our implementation of Canvas, has us in a great place. It isn't going to be comfortable, and it will not be smooth. I believe Hilliard's educators are better prepared than many university and college professors for eLearning.

I appreciate all you do every day and what you will continue to do during this world-wide pandemic. I have complete confidence that Hilliard will rise up, meet this challenge, and continue to provide educational opportunities to our students. We know these opportunities won't be the same as what you do in our classrooms. We do know that we can keep the learning going.

Monday - Professional Learning Day

The increase in the community-spread of this virus has reinforced the need for social distance. Keeping this in mind, I am placing the following restrictions in place for Monday's Professional Learning Day and until further notice.

- There will be no Staff Meetings or large group meetings. Teachers are encouraged to work in grade-level teams or with department colleagues, but only in spaces where appropriate social distance is easily maintained.
- The Technology Department will be providing instructions on the use of Zoom Video Conferencing. We strongly encourage all educators to begin using Zoom as soon as possible. Video interactions are going to become essential for both meetings and instruction.
- Teachers are encouraged to build online sharing spaces and ways to exchange both ideas and resources. We have an elite education family; there is no reason we aren't sharing lessons, assessments, and new techniques. We are physically, but not intellectually isolated.

- Secretarial and administrative staff will work, as of this moment, through the end of this week. We will re-evaluate the situation after spring break. For this week, please respect and maintain social distance with all individuals at all times. If working conditions don't permit a six to eight-foot buffer for all employees, find a place that does. Conference rooms and media centers are open for secretaries or other support personnel to set up shop. Also, please don't congregate in the office area.
- While teachers do not need to stay at school for the entire day, we do request that teachers report to their building at your normal report time. When individual teachers feel comfortable that they can launch eLearning on Wednesday, by preparing at home the remainder of Monday and on Tuesday, they can leave school. Please just let your principal know you have your materials and are ready to go. Teachers will have access to their school buildings during the eLearning days. If you would prefer to work in your classroom, that is an option available to you. Buildings will be accessible to teachers and staff between the hours of 6:30 AM and 9:00 PM each day we are in session with eLearning.

Instructional Thoughts

- In all likelihood, eLearning will be taking place for more than six weeks. We need to build our practices to last. As Governor DeWine said at Saturday's briefing, "this isn't a sprint, this is a marathon." This is uncharted educational waters for both teachers and students. We should all ease into eLearning. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday are setting the table for what's to come after Spring Break. Parents, students, and teachers will all be on different learning curves; we must admit and embrace the challenge of operating in a new platform. We will give grace to everyone during the first three days. Make sure kids are signing-in and can access assignments. Test your video conferencing and video lesson; identify barriers and problem solve unique challenges. These first three days before spring break are a "test run."
- I shared the expectation that teachers post three-hours of "office time" for parents and students to have timely feedback and interaction. We are flexible with teachers, understanding all of our lives have been changed by this crisis. We ask that you hold your office hours between 7:00 AM and 9:00 PM. Choose a time that works for you and your family. I do ask that the schedule is consistent and posted from week to week.
- Also, I do not want teachers working and responding at all hours of the day. Yes, I expect several more hours of lesson preparation, teachers learning about tools and resources, professional collaboration, and other work tasks

each day. But, teachers should set strict limits on their own screen time. Get away from the computer during the day. Do not respond to emails and requests after your posted office hours. Sure, you are working during the day, and you can interact with a student or parent that is expected. It's not expected that teachers are online at 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM if those aren't your posted office hours.

- Take care of yourself. This is an unprecedented challenge. When weather permits, get outside and go for a walk a couple of times a day. Garden, clean those leaves out of the flowerbeds, or just read a novel unrelated to school. Don't make eLearning more stressful than needed.
- The coaches, administrators, and support staff are all here to help and support during the COVID-19 crisis. If you need something or have an idea that can raise our level of performance, please speak up. Our Power of The Team is what makes us elite. Your expertise makes our collective performance better.
- Student lunch delivery or distribution, depending on location, will begin tomorrow and continue through spring break. More details will be sent tonight via school messenger. We have kids who need to eat; this is the least we can do. There may be a "call for volunteers" during spring break to assist with lunch distribution. More details will come in the future. Of course, we will continue to find ways to provide additional support and services.

I will be posting daily videos this week and then again after spring break. You can expect a daily memo from me to our staff and community, during the first several weeks of eLearning.

Again, we don't BCD in Hilliard. This Event is no one's fault. We will respond to this Event with skill, with the best Response available to us, to create the best Outcome for our students. During the next six to eight weeks, we will adapt and adjust as needed, and we will step up to each challenge.

I am humbled and proud to lead this talented team. This is a once in a generation crisis. I will continue to communicate with you daily.

Respectfully,

John