

March 18, 2020

Hello, Friends and Families of the ER9 Schools:

I am pleased to let you know the following:

1. My office will be sending an email to all families today with information about how they might be able to borrow a district chromebook during the Covid-19 closures. Please look for it, but also, please only submit a request if you are in need. We don't have enough for everyone or even for a majority. I explain what we think the Districts can do to help in that email. It will have to be one per household at first.
2. On Thursday, March 19, we will have many of our specialists, grade level team leaders, peer coaches, teachers and coordinators working from home to help organize our transition to Distance Learning. This will not be all members of our faculty, but those whom we have asked to help the Asst. Superintendent, Dr. Pierson Ugol, to coordinate our transition.
3. On Friday, March 20, the members of our faculties for all five ER9 schools will work from home during the time window more or less of the normal hours of a school day on professional development for Distance Learning.
4. It is our intention to engage the students on Monday, March 23, in Distance Learning. The students will receive information directly if they are old enough, and all parents will receive directions via emails from us on how to go about getting on line and working.

Monday will not be smooth, **but we have to start somewhere**. I hope it makes sense that the older the student, the greater our expectation for personal management. We also realize that older siblings might have to help out the younger ones. We will all have to sort that out together, so I'm asking us all to be flexible. And patient.

You are correct if you think what we ask of a high school student in terms of hours of work and degree of content will be greater than what we ask of the little ones. I know our teachers are the real experts in age-related assignments.

5. We will explain how to log onto our system and make your children's daily attendance known to us. I expect there will be some gremlins on the Internet as many schools draw bandwidth. We will work it out.
6. We know that not everyone will have access from the first minute on Monday; we will have IT people to help troubleshoot. We will make a new email address known to you so you can ask questions.
7. You may have heard that last night the Governor modified the terms of his executive order. We now know the school year will end on the scheduled dates. That's Friday, June 12 for the

high school and Tuesday, June 16 for the other four schools. Yes, this means we will not be in session for the last portion of June. No, I do not have an answer for you yet about the April Spring Break. That's a decision for the Boards of Education.

8. Today we made a lot of progress.

9. You might continue to think about how to organize your home space for your children to turn back into students for a few hours each day starting on Monday. You might think about which fellow students could be your children's study buddies in a virtual form. They won't be able to get together at your kitchen table physically, but it might help if you contact other parents to set up chats.

10. To that end, in some cases you will be virtually inviting teachers or paraprofessionals into your homes. Therefore, please consider how to make online interactions that might be live and involve teachers and other students as safe as possible. I will be offering my teachers and staff some thoughts about this. For example, I don't think a child should be in a video chat from private space. Please consider how the common areas of your homes could serve as the class space. If a parent or au pair or nanny happens to be in the background, that's fine.

I'm a bit tired this afternoon, but I am thrilled that we are one day closer to restarting the learning engine.

Tom McMorran, Ed.D.

Superintendent

Easton, Redding, and Region 9 School Districts