

March 27, 2020

Hello Friends and Families of ER9,

This evening I write to you with gratitude for how we as a community have worked this week on the education of our children. I am having a Goldilocks moment. Some of you have indicated our new Distance Learning was just right. Others that we asked too much, and another group that we didn't challenge our kids enough.

I humbly ask you to pause and distinguish between a marathon and a sprint. In a sprint, we rush to see who is the fastest and the best. There is one winner and everyone else is a loser. In a marathon, the phalanx gets out ahead and sets a rapid pace, but everyone else falls behind. The winners cross the tape a bit after two hours; the rest could take many times that.

In a regular school year, we might accept a marathon or a sprint as a metaphor for achievement. However, in a crisis such as this we need to think about lifeboats and the wellbeing of everyone. Have we done enough to show we are all thinking about the learning needs of us all? Some families are fabulously resourced and everyone has a computer. Others are not so fortunate. As a community, we must continue with asynchronous work until we can sort out how to ensure all students have a level playing field.

As a community, we must all care about our own children and the children of our neighbors.

A week ago, we gave the faculty one professional development day to transition from traditional brick and mortar school programming to Distance Learning. At the end of this week, some of you are eager to adopt full, comprehensive remote instruction. We are heading in that direction, but as our profession has said for a while now, we can leave no child behind.

On Monday, I am calling for a two-hour student delayed opening. The students should not log on until two hours after the normal start of the school day for their schools. I need to give teachers time to regroup, hold virtual faculty meetings, and start to think about the logistics of distance learning.

Before the weekend is over, I will follow up with more details about the rules of engagement for our continuing journey towards Distance Learning.

I have heard from many teachers of their awe and admiration for many families who have worked this week on how to balance home, life, career, and education. We are all in this together.

Let's all be patient with each other. Let's not let our fears govern our behaviors. Let's collaborate so future generations say this was our finest hour in Easton and Redding. I know Churchill said something like this years ago. I think that strengthens our faith in each other.

With gratitude,

Tom McMorrان, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Easton, Redding & Region 9 School Districts