

Dear DISD Families,

I pray everyone is doing well. We continue to look for ways to support both you and your children during this pandemic. In extending our distance and remote learning this week, I have thought of other ways that our district could further support each of you. So today's letter will have some tips/hints for families and also answer some questions that I have gotten this past week.

1. **April Fools' Day Prank-** It was circulating on Wednesday, that Governor Abbott had signed a law stating that all students would have to repeat their same grade over next school year. LOL! I wished I could scream 'April Fools!' because that is not the case. However, the state's education agency (TEA) is leaving the promotion or retention to local school districts. With that said, our campuses will be looking at each individual child's academic progress to determine that decision. Data that we will be looking at will be age appropriate data along with these considerations: grades throughout the school year, mid-term grades, DRA scores, iStation progress, mock test scores, unit tests scores, attendance rates, checkpoint scores, academic progress from the beginning of the school year to spring break, etc. We will also be *considering participation on the remote learning and it will be part of the consideration for promotion or retention*. It is very important for our students to continue their education. Encourage them to participate in any Google Meets and/or be in contact with their teachers via email. We ARE monitoring participation at this point. Our teachers are providing lessons that have already been introduced and should be all review and reinforcement of concepts. The students need to do their best on these assignments. I know that Colbert's children are taking pictures of the completed work and sending them into their teacher. That is something that we probably will be moving towards for students who are doing the packets only. As expectations change, we will continue to update and inform you. If you have any questions about the lessons, then please reach out and ask for help. We all are here to support in any way we can.
2. **Three concerns from different parents:** "I am having problems with my child sleeping during the day." "It is difficult to get him/her to work on the lessons." "Should I be monitoring my child's devices?" Yes! Here are a few suggestions:
 - a. Routine, routine, routine is one suggestion. Research shows that children (and adults) are more productive if they have a routine. We posted a suggested schedule for parents on our website.
 - b. Kids NEED at least 8 hours a night of sleep. I had this same problem with my teenagers when they were in school. One of the things that I did was take up their cell phones, iPads, Chromebooks, etc. every evening at 9:30 p.m. Set down rules for your children on how late they can talk to their friends and stick to it! Consistency is the key. Setting parameters will only help in the long run.
 - c. Set clear expectations with your children concerning social media. Clearly define what your child can and cannot do on social media and have those conversations regularly.
 - d. Have the computer in an open place. Consider not allowing computer or cellphone usage in your child's bedroom. Only allow your child to interact with social media in an open and more public location in your home. Putting the family computer somewhere public like the living room or kitchen will help you casually keep tabs on your child's activity without being entirely invasive.
 - e. Consider putting passwords on devices. Whether it's a computer, laptop, tablet, or cellphone, have a password for each device in your home. This way, your kids have to come to you if they want to use it. This is especially helpful for younger children. If your children must come to you for permission, you can know each time they use the device and for how long they use it.
 - f. Have teachable moments with your child. No amount of monitoring can keep all children safe at all times. If your child does experience cyberbullying or receive sexual messages, use the experience to teach them about internet safety. Remind them to protect their identity with strangers and maintain their reputation both online and offline.
 - g. Protect their personal information. Children unintentionally reveal more about themselves and their whereabouts than they should online, helping dangerous "digital strangers" find them in the real world and/or identify thieves. Keep your children's personal information safe!

- h. Safeguard their reputation. Certain things shouldn't be posted online because they will harm your child's reputation or hurt their future chances for a job or college admission. Monitoring lets you know if your child (or their friends) post something damaging.
- 3. **I need help with the remote learning. Where can I go to get help?** There is an icon on our homepage (on the right side) that says 'Remote Learning'. There is lots of great information on that site. We have specific instructions to assist with: Clever Login, Google Classroom Login, QR Codes, and also a Tech Help email that we check every day.
- 4. **Do we need to read every day?** Yes, yes, yes is the answer!
 - a. Our librarians have reached out in our weekly newsletters. These are found on the district website homepage under 'Remote Learning'. First click on 'General Information' and then click on the Newspaper icon. Scroll down through the Newsletters. There is some GREAT information from our districts' librarians. Also, if you are an Amazon Prime member, they are offering FREE on-line books during this pandemic. I encourage you also to reach out to your child's Reading/ELAR teachers for more suggestions.
 - b. Research also shows that if a child reads 20 minutes a day, then they will be more likely to stay on grade level than others that do not. I would encourage you to get your children to read 20 minutes in the morning and another 20 minutes sometime in the afternoon or evening. Just think how this will increase your child's reading skills.
 - c. Another suggestion would be to ask questions over what your child has read. Please read every day!
 - d. Read with your child. Why not share a chapter book with your children? What about starting a family book club? How about reading aloud to your children? All of these are GREAT ways to connect with your children and show your kiddos the importance of reading.
- 5. **Are you still passing out meals daily?** Yes, we will continue providing this service as long as we can (and is safe for our staff). We monitor our staff daily and they are also self-reporting. Weekly menus can be found on our website homepage. If you see one of our Child Nutrition workers, then please let them know how much you appreciate their service! NOTE: We will NOT be providing a meal on Good Friday, April 10.

Thank you DISD families. I appreciate your patience and flexibility as every week we make changes based on the national, state, and local guidance. We are all in this together. Please let us know if we can assist, support, or help you in any way. I continue to pray for our community, our county, our state, our country, and our world. God bless and I ask Him for your protection during this time.

Dr. J.