



Dear PSD Families:

As we enter our third week of remote learning at the elementary level, I wanted to take a few moments to communicate with you about what our students can and should expect, as well as how we see the role parents and guardians will play over the next several weeks.

First off, thank you for your patience and understanding. While I know things regarding school may be frustrating, I also know that you are possibly facing challenges of your own, due to these unusual circumstances. I imagine you never saw yourselves trying to get your children positioned as successful remote learners - or video conferencing experts. Like you, our teachers are facing challenges they have never faced before. Moving from caring educators who spend five days a week in person with the students, to only a voice on a phone or a little square on a computer screen, is not exactly how they thought 2019-2020 would conclude. They miss their students and they are frustrated that they can't see them each day.

Last week, we distributed over 2,000 laptops to students across our 30 elementary schools. This was a big step in providing our students better access throughout the district. While many of our families have basic technology connectivity in their home, please know that thousands of our students do not. This crisis has forced families without connectivity and computers to rely on their cell phones to communicate. Cell phones may be adequate for basic information, but they are no substitute for an actual computer. Please know that the district is now working to provide wireless internet connectivity in areas across PSD where none exists. Additionally, we are ordering hundreds of WiFi devices that will also help families who are unable to connect. Stay tuned for more information.

This brings us to the point of expectations. Many of you have asked what you should expect each day. How long should students be working? What type of work should they be doing? How much should parents help? Here is what you can and should expect over the next several weeks:

What you can expect from your teachers:

- Teachers to contact students in some way, five days per week. We believe our elementary students can't lose touch with the schools they love and the adults who care for them. It will remain a priority throughout the remainder of the year. They need to know that despite everything, the 2019-2020 school year is still happening.
- Teachers to pay close attention to the internet connectivity level of their homeroom students and adjust instruction to meet their needs. While many of you are hoping for a complete online model, much like our high schools, that is not possible when many students are unable to participate. We will NOT leave students behind or put them at a disadvantage because they are without the adequate technology. There are many opportunities for learning that are not online or delivered via technology.
- Teachers to provide basic practice in the core subjects nearly every day. Expect between one and three hours of work per day, on average. It will be difficult to offer a great deal of new instruction, but teachers will be expecting students to continue to master the basics in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. Additionally, you should start to see work in Social Studies, Science, Art, Physical Education, and Music.
- Teachers to make mistakes, try things that don't work the first time, struggle with new technology applications, and make several adjustments before finding a groove. We are all learners.

What we expect from our families:

- Families will help their child stay connected to the teacher and classmates. Teachers will open the doors to those connections, and we want you to encourage your child to participate and interact. It will make you both feel a lot better about these trying circumstances.
- Families will be prepared to help their children when needed. The younger the student, the more likely it will be for them to be assigned things in smaller chunks. Older elementary students can expect to be assigned work that requires more time. Either way, we will never be able to fill the 6.5 hours they do in school. They aren't sharing learning space with 20 other students and they don't have the typical transitions that take place when they are in their classrooms.
- Parents and guardians will communicate with the teacher when they have questions or see their child struggling. We have set our communication model to be homeroom teacher to parents. That is the way you typically communicate during the year and it is much more timely and precise when you work directly with the classroom teacher. Don't wait if something doesn't seem ok.

Finally, we expect everyone to be patient and understanding of each other as we face these challenging times. Like you, we are trying our best to make sense of this situation, as well as optimize the learning opportunities for the students. It is a struggle and will continue to be one for the short term while our teachers try to establish the most productive ways of educating their students from a distance.

Thank you in advance for your support and understanding. Stay in touch with your child's teachers and work through them to better understand their expectations and how you can specifically help your child. We will continue to communicate through our teachers as they know you and your children the best. Again, thank you for your dedication to your family and your support of your teachers as we navigate these challenging times together.



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