

Hello Cascade Families,

I want to start by thanking you for navigating this difficult time with your student the best you can. We really miss our students and wish they were with us in the building as we move down the stretch of the 2019-20 school year. As you can imagine, flipping school on it's head and developing a system that works for families and staff is a tricky task. We appreciate your patience as we have worked to develop systems that align with district and Oregon Department of Education (ODE) guidelines. The following is an outline of how we will shift from Supplemental Learning to Distance Learning For All which I referenced last week.

I have broken things up into categories below to assist with reading.

Schedule:

We know your students thrive on consistency and structure and that can be difficult to provide in this environment. Therefore we have worked to develop a **suggested** schedule for your student. This would start Monday, April 13th.

SCHEDULE

As you can see, we will be on a rotating schedule by period. A typical online student has a full load of three to four classes at a time, so the idea of fitting seven into one day seems a little overwhelming. Additionally, if a student engaged in all seven of their classes every day, they would exceed the ODE recommended maximum guideline for learning.

Our staff will be putting new learning out three times a week (M, W, F) for your student to digest in manageable chunks based on their schedule. For instance, we are recommending that your student work on their 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th period classes on Monday and Wednesday and their 5th, 6th, and 7th period classes on Tuesday and Thursday. Then on Friday, they would prioritize the core (Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, and Science) before partaking in optional activities in PE and electives. This keeps students from being overwhelmed by content and allows us to fall within ODE guidelines for learning. One benefit of this suggested schedule is students could be working at the same time on the same content and connect with each other for support.

Suggested Schedule?

Yes. We realize that learning at home can be difficult and have learned first-hand how hard it can be to juggle a schedule with everything going on. This is why our teachers will be providing content that can be accessed at any time. If the suggested schedule does not work for you and your family, you are free to have your student engage in the learning when it makes sense. However, we do still recommend that students break things up into manageable chunks regardless of when they engage in their learning.

Office Hours:

As seen in the schedule above, our teachers will be conducting office hours by period in alignment with our suggested schedule. To keep contact organized and manageable, our staff will be available by period in 30 minute blocks. To be clear, your student does not have to connect during these times. This is just when staff are available for support. Our staff will communicate the medium in which they are available. It could be email, phone, WebEx, or something else. Please keep in mind our teachers are working from home and have their own families to care for. The medium they choose will be what works best for their situation. Regardless of how they communicate, they will be available for support during these times.

The "OPEN" time slot on Tuesdays and Thursdays are for students that may have missed the time slot corresponding with their class period.

Fridays will be reserved for staff meetings, targeted support, phone calls, lesson planning and grading.

Grading?

Yes, one of the big shifts in Distance Learning is that we will be issuing grades and giving students credit for their classes.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, traditional school is looking anything but traditional. Because of school closures for at least six weeks (possibly longer), but instruction starting again in April, 2020, there will be a shift in how Bend-La Pine Middle School grades will be reported during the spring term of the 2019-20 school year.

Whether students return to school prior to June, 2020 or not, the default grades issued to students at the end of the grading term will be P (Pass) or NG (No Grade). This temporary decision is being made due to the need for remote teaching and questions around equitable access to learning.

If, however, you would like to have your child receive traditional letter grades (A, B, C, D, F) for one or more classes in spite of the changes to teaching/learning caused by this pandemic, you may request this by completing a form and returning it (email or mail) to your child's Counselor. [NOTE: If your MS child is enrolled in a course that may possibly be added to her/his high school transcript (e.g. Algebra I, Spanish I), your child's teacher for this course will notify you that grades for this class will default as a letter grade, with the option to request P/NG as an alternative.] Due date for submitting the form is May 29, 2020. Please reach out to student's counselor for the form.

Additionally, a "Pass" will have no more or less value than a letter grade due to the unique circumstances we are in. Again, an exception to this would be if the course is for high school credit (Spanish I or II and Algebra I).

I want to stress that we understand that learning may look different for different students and families due to this situation. We will be very flexible in working with students and families in this process.

We will start with graded work on **Monday, April 13th**.

Resources:

We would like to provide you with a few resources as well to help organize your students education. Below are links to three documents that could help. The first is a daily to do check list that will remind you and your student what they should be doing each day. The second is a weekly assignment checklist that your student can use to keep track of their work. These can be printed or downloaded onto your students iPad for repeated use.

The third document is a learning dashboard that has our suggested schedule and office hours as well as links to the google classroom codes for all of our classes. This will be handy to ensure your student is connected to all of their teachers.

[Daily Checklist](#)

[Weekly Assignment Checklist](#)

[CMS Distance Learning Dashboard](#)

Forecasting:

With the increasing likelihood that we will not be back at school this year, we will need to plan for next year remotely. Please look for a separate email by Thursday with links for your 6th and 7th grader to forecast electives next year. We are planning on offering a couple of new classes, so please read through the class guide before your student chooses. We will be working with our elementary schools in the next week to forecast with 5th graders.

Tech Support:

The district has made available help desk support for families to help troubleshoot issues with your iPad or solve password issues. Please use the following phone number, 541-355-8700. That number will take families to a phone tree with options to select the relevant school(s) for their family.

WebEx:

As you've likely noticed, we are using the app WebEx from Cisco frequently to connect with your students. While this tool is great for interaction, it does need to be used

responsibly. Below is a link to expectations for this app. Please review them with your student.

[WebEx Norms](#)

Scheduling Note:

Spring conferences were on the calendar this week but those have been canceled and we will be providing material on those days.

Again, our shift to Distance Learning with new office hours starts **Monday 4/13**. We will be offering supplemental learning the rest of this week.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES (From Superintendent's previous message)

We shared some links with families to national resources around mental health recently, but want to follow up with some local information and resources for you, as well.

Q: Can you provide some tips for maintaining mental and emotional health during this crisis?

A: Health officials acknowledge that feelings of anxiety and stress are normal during times like these.

Social distancing is critical to physical health, both for individuals and to protect the health of our community and our frontline responders. But mental health professionals suggest that it's important to continue to make safe social connections at this time. Safe connections might include regular phone calls, group texts, FaceTime, email, going on walks with household family members, time with a family pet and more.

Q: Who can I call for help?

A: If you or your children are in need of free mental health support, you can call the COVID-19 info line at 541-699-5109 to request to be connected with resources. Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

You can also call the Deschutes County Crisis Line 541-322-7500 ext. 9 and/or visit the Deschutes County walk-in center at 2577 NE Courtney, Bend, Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Staff can also utilize their EAP benefit. You can access services by calling 1-866-750-1327 or going online to www.myrbh.com and using access code: OEBC.

As always, call 9-1-1 if necessary.

Q: What resources are available for students?

A: Students can refer to the [FirstStep app](#) on their iPads, or they can download it at home on their personal devices. Inside the FirstStep app, student will find links to the [Oregon Youthline](#) (a free, confidential teen-to-teen crisis and help line; teens are available 4 to 10 p.m. daily; adults available all other times) 1-877-968-8491 or text teen2teen to 839863.

Q: Do you have tips for managing stress and anxiety?

A: Our partners at Deschutes County Behavioral Health offered the following tips:

- Take care of yourself: Get enough sleep, eat healthy, exercise.
- Talk to others: Feelings of anxiety are normal in a situation like this. Reach out and talk to people in your community who can provide support.
- Avoid rumors and inaccurate information: Rely on official sources for information, including Deschutes County for countywide updates: www.deschutes.org/covid19; Oregon Health Authority for statewide updates: www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus; Centers for Disease Control for nationwide updates: www.cdc.gov/covid19.
- Do what you can: Even when some things are out of our control, there are always things that we as individuals and communities can control.
 - Wash your hands often.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
 - Stay home when you are sick.
 - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Ask for help: Local residents can reach out 24-hours-a-day to area crisis lines:
 - Deschutes County 800-875-7364; Crook County 541-323-5530; and Jefferson County 541-475-4822.
- Seek help if you're struggling with persistent inability to sleep, increasing drug or alcohol use, an overwhelming sense of depression or panic, urges to harm yourself or others, or an inability to take care of yourself or those who depend on you. Please do not call 911 unless you're experiencing a medical emergency. Instead, call a crisis line or the nonemergency COVID-19 info line at 541-699-5109.
- Reminder: Taking precautions is altruistic. When we remind ourselves that others are benefitting from our actions, it makes sacrifices easier to bear. By staying home and taking precautions, we are helping to keep vulnerable populations safe and supporting our frontline responders.

Q: How about tips for parents?

A: Our partners at Deschutes County Behavioral Health offered the following tips:

- Remain calm and reassuring: If true, emphasize to your children that they and your family are fine.
- Make yourself available: Let your children talk and give them plenty of time and attention.
- Talk to children in language they can understand: The CDC suggests telling children that, from what doctors have seen so far, most kids aren't getting very sick. In fact, most people who have gotten COVID-19 haven't gotten very sick. Only a small group have had serious problems. Keep the conversation going. Make time to check in regularly as the situation develops. Take cues from your child if they become afraid or overwhelmed offer comfort. If you need help, seek professional health.
- Avoid language that stigmatizes or assigns blame: Remind children that viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person's race, ethnicity or national origin.
- Monitor television viewing and social media: Try to limit children's exposure to media and talk about what they're seeing. Use only reliable sources of information.
- Maintain healthy behaviors and household routines: Serve nutritious meals, encourage adequate sleep and exercise, and maintain household routines to the extent possible.
- Teach strategies to prevent infection: Remind children to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (or the length of two "Happy Birthday" songs) when they come in from outside, before they eat, and after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the bathroom.
- Find more info: <http://bit.ly/COVID19-TipsForParents>

Again, thank you for your support.

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