March 20, 2020

Good afternoon Callahan Families,

As you know, we are faced with some very challenging times in our world. These challenges have trickled down into almost every aspect of our lives, disrupting our daily routines and life as we know it. In trying to keep some normalcy for our students, we are moving to distance learning in order to keep our students connected with their education. Reaching our students through distance learning is exciting for us! Much of this is new for us, and I know it’s new for many of you, but together, we can make it work! Our Governor, Gina Raimondo, had a strong message for parents in her press conference urging you to take online learning seriously. I also ask you to take online learning seriously. My teachers are home with their families, just as you are. Many of you are working from home, just as they are doing. Teachers are creating lessons and preparing to be online live each day, and it’s important to your children to join them at their specified times for planned learning.

Just as I ask you to take online learning seriously, I ask that you send that same message to your children. I’m attaching our Distance Learning Schedule to this email, and I ask that you take note of the times that your child should be online. Please know that daily attendance will be taken, so it is important for your child to be present and ready to work. The academic classes will run in the morning hours, while specials and independent learning will run in the afternoon. You will see that there are Live Class times, and Live Meet times. Live Class times are when your child’s teacher will be teaching live, in real time. Live Meet times are when your child’s teacher will be live online to help any student who might have a question or need support. There are also times built in for Zearn, Lexia, and Silent Reading. Finally, we have built in a You Choose block at 1:30, where students can follow the direction of their teacher with some online activities, such as Scholastic, National Geographic, virtual museum tours, animal cams, and read-alouds, to name a few.

Tips for home support:
- Set up a learning space
- Be familiar with the schedule

The Burrillville School Department does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, color or handicap in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
• Ensure that your child is ready to be online for their specific times
• Reinforce to your child that this is real school time - they they are not on vacation

As we move forward with our new distance learning endeavor, I ask that you be patient throughout the process. Our teachers have been working under a short time period to prepare for their online teaching, and some of this will evolve as we move along. I ask also for you to reach out to your child’s teacher to stay informed and to ask how you can help to support deeper learning at home. Lastly, I ask that you reinforce the importance of following the learning expectations each day with your child, and that you hold them accountable as we will. Children need schedules, and this daily schedule will definitely help you to navigate this distance learning process.

In closing, I know that supporting distance learning at home isn’t something that most of you ever anticipated that you would be doing, and believe me when I say that I understand. You will be faced with challenges, and you will have questions. Please reach out to us at any time and we will help! Both myself and my teachers will keep you informed of what is happening not only in the distance learning world, but also with the many changes that are happening in the Rhode Island world of education.

We miss being in school, and we miss your kids! Being online will be a great opportunity to stay connected with them and to keep the learning fresh! Be safe and be well.

David P. Brissette