

April 9th, 2020

Dear Happy Hollow Families,

I hope that you are well. I know that I have said this before, but it remains true: we miss your children and you! The teachers and staff at Happy Hollow have truly treasured the opportunities to communicate with you through virtual platforms during the last few weeks and continue to be rewarded by knowing that students are connected to their classrooms and Happy Hollow School. Thank you for all of your efforts to ensure these connections continue.

I am writing today to inform you about Phase Two of remote teaching and learning which will begin this coming Monday, April 13th. Our dedicated teachers are hard at work preparing for this phase and we are excited to roll it out next week. As it has been since the school buildings were closed on March 12th, **our goal is to keep students engaged in learning and connected to the Happy Hollow School Community.**

Phase Two of Remote Teaching and Learning will build off our enrichment model (Phase One) and provide 3.5 hours of school-based learning and assignments each day. We are rolling out Phase Two with the intention of returning to school on May 4th but we are also preparing for the possibility that we will return to school later than planned. While we will move forward with new content in all subject areas, each grade level will have a specific emphasis on a designated subject area. For Kindergarten through Grade 2, the emphasis will be language arts and for Grades 3 through 5, the emphasis will be mathematics. In these specific emphasized subject areas, teachers will focus on new skill development and prioritize student feedback. Students will be expected to submit work in these emphasized subject areas on a regular basis. Administrators and curriculum leaders chose these specific academic areas of emphasis for many reasons, including preparation for the next grade level.

During Phase One of distance learning, which has been considered optional, we have been pleased with the high levels of student engagement - students have generally been participating and completing assignments. As we transition to Phase Two, we have raised our levels of expectations for student engagement. Completion of student work and activities is now required and no longer optional. I want to also emphasize that while we are stating that completion of student assignments is now required, we also recognize the need to allow significant family discretion in determining what work individual students are able to complete due to individual family circumstances. We trust that every family will do the best they can. We encourage the adults at home to stay in close communication with classroom teachers and support specialists in order to let them know how it is going so that teachers can modify individual expectations as needed. Our intent is to offer greater opportunities for student learning and growth, not to add stress to anyone's lives at this time.

As you have already heard from Dr. Unobskey, formal spring parent-teacher conferences have been canceled. During this period of remote teaching and learning however, teachers will

provide regular, formative feedback to students about their work completion. At the district level, we will determine the best way to communicate student progress at the end of the year given that teaching and learning has looked completely different from previous school years. We recognize that most students will not reach typical end-of-year benchmarks, and we will prepare to be able to meet students where they are academically when we return to school.

You can expect regular, consistent communication from your child's teacher. While recognizing the importance of efficiency and minimizing multiple emails to parents, we have also seen a correlation between regular communication from teachers and active engagement from students. You can expect that your child's teacher will offer both synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities on a consistent basis. Specialists (PE, Music, Art, Technology, and Library) will continue to provide asynchronous lessons to students on a weekly basis, and they will join classroom meetings occasionally so that they can maintain connections with students.

I would like to publicly thank the teachers and staff of Happy Hollow School. They have worked tirelessly these past four weeks to learn new skills, rethink the execution of their excellent practice and demonstrate flexibility in ways we could only have imagined a few months ago. At every turn they have kept their students, your children, at the center of their work. It has been an impressive and humbling transformation to witness. I know you join me in expressing my gratitude to them.

I would also like to thank each of you in advance for your partnership and support during this next phase of remote teaching and learning. I know that for many of us, the last four weeks have been very challenging. Now more than ever however, our positive collaboration is critical to your children's success. Your efforts are recognized and I have no doubt that we will come out of this crisis an even stronger school community.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions, or if there is anything we can do for you and your family.

Sincerely,
Tricia O'Reilly
Principal, Happy Hollow School