



March 22, 2020

Dear West Bloomfield Families:

As we end the first week of this unprecedented week in our country, we cannot begin to express our gratitude to you for all your support and our pride in what the West Bloomfield School District was able to accomplish this week. The events surrounding the rapid spread of COVID-19 and the subsequent changes to our lives has been nothing short of astonishing. Your willingness to help your child access Google Classroom, sit next to them as they Zoom with their classmates and teachers and supporting our staff with positive words has been a beacon of light during this uncertain time. We thank you.

We cannot begin to share the many incredible things that have taken place this week to make our Cloud Learning Initiative a success. We are grateful to have a Board of Education that supports innovative thinking and allows us to be leaders in education. To think just nine days ago, we gathered to launch remote learning, design meaningful lessons and plan to get materials and devices into the hands of all students by the following Monday. We did it and we did it well. This truly was a West Bloomfield family effort; our administrative assistants, paraeducators and building leaders distributed more than 2,500 instructional packets to our kindergarten through fifth-grade students and over 900 Chromebooks. Our bus drivers drove those same materials and devices to the homes of our families who couldn't make it to the schools to pick them up. Our food service workers served 6,154 meals this week to our families, including meals for the weekend. Each of our teachers established Google Classrooms for the classes they teach. Educators held PLC meetings, principals had staff meetings and teachers spent time with their students; we had "school" this week!

Obviously, the memo released by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Friday, indicating that they had no mechanism in place to officially "count" online learning, threw us for a loop. It came without warning and dismissed our efforts to provide instruction and normalcy for our kids. In true TeamWB fashion, we rose to the challenge. The hundreds of calls and emails and tweets (on Twitter see #makeitcountWB) are making a difference; we sincerely believe we have caused MDE, our legislators, and our Governor to pause and consider how districts can deliver instruction differently. We anticipate favorable legislative action and/or an executive order enabling thoughtfully designed online learning to "count" during these challenging times.

We will continue our Cloud Learning Initiative as we know this is what is best for our students. Teachers have already prepared lessons through this Friday, March 27. At this point, we still plan to return to school on Monday, April 5; if this changes, we will certainly let you know.



Here is something very important we want you to know: you are doing the best you can to educate your child at home. We know you have other responsibilities, including work, other children and just the general stress this situation has caused. Our educators are doing the best they can too, and are doing an excellent job delivering instruction differently. If we all work together, support one another and do what we can, our kids will learn and, most importantly, know the adults in their lives love them.

If you are struggling to access Google Classroom, keep up with the workload or schedule or just have a question, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We will answer all questions and do whatever we can to make “school” a good experience for everyone. If you had to prioritize your time, the Google form, time spent reading and one or two math games are a must each day for our K-5 students. Our secondary teachers are in constant communication with their students; most are moving along and doing well.

There are still many unknowns should we not return to school on April 5. Our teams are putting plans in place for an extended closure and will keep you informed as we go.

Thanks for ALL you have done and continue to do to support your learners at home. We are truly trailblazers in the state of Michigan! We have so much to celebrate and will when life returns to normal. Please do not hesitate to email me with questions or concerns. Please stay safe.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gerald Hill
Superintendent
West Bloomfield School District