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August 3, 2020

Dear Weslaco ISD Family,

We hope this letter finds you safe and in good health. This year continues to be unpredictable with the pandemic and now the weather. We understand that many of you are going through so much and continue to keep our students, staff, and community in mind as we move forward with planning the 2020-2021 school year.

Throughout the summer, Weslaco ISD continued to monitor changes in back-to-school guidelines from Local and State health officials as well as the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The updates and direction to school districts will likely continue to change. Nonetheless, Weslaco ISD is forging forward with remote learning for the beginning of the school year.

Current State and TEA Guidance and Direction

A significant interpretation was made on July 28, 2020 by State Attorney General Ken Paxton that led to changes in TEA's guidance to school districts. As a result, Weslaco ISD is reviewing and revising final back-to-school plans.

Currently, the TEA is allowing school districts to begin the school year with four weeks of remote or at-home learning with the submission of a plan that ensures teaching, learning, student attendance, and other State requirements. Weslaco ISD will begin the school year with strong remote instruction and one-to-one devices for students. If needed and under certain conditions, the TEA is currently permitting School Boards to approve an extra four weeks of remote learning to allow a successful and safe transition back to on-campus instruction for parents choosing this option.

Day 1: Online Strong

On Monday, August 3, 2020, the Board of Trustees approved administration's recommendation to move the first day of school for students to Monday, August 31, 2020. This change comes at the recommendation of administration after consultation with Weslaco ISD's District Advisory Committee and campus principals and also moves the end of the instructional year to Thursday, May 27, 2021. The extra week will provide more time for campuses to disseminate new resources for remote learning, teachers to build relationships and share expectations for remote learning with students and parents, teams to finalize their online strong instruction, and more.

The Weslaco ISD will begin the year with two remote learning experiences for students: synchronous (live) and asynchronous (self-paced) instruction. Both require minimally 90% student attendance for course credit and grade level promotion. Additional information about these two types of learning can be found at <https://www.wisd.us/>.

Preparing for remote instruction has been years in the making. Over the last five years, our School Board has approved \$4.7 million in technology upgrades for students and teachers which includes \$810,000 recently approved for additional technology resources to enhance the remote learning experience. In our commitment for excellence, Weslaco ISD has exceeded the 1:1 ratio of students to Chromebooks/computers for some years now and will continue to provide both students and staff with a wide variety of technology hardware, software, and online resources to ensure a successful start of the school year. Campuses will soon be providing more information regarding dissemination of the new technology tools for students.

Responsiveness to Family Needs

In support of families experiencing hardships due to the pandemic and Hurricane Hanna, Weslaco ISD campus and district administration with the consultation of the District Advisory Committee and support of the School Board will be relaxing the uniform requirements during the 2020-2021 school year. It is our intention and hope that this decision provides some relief to our families. While wearing uniforms is still welcomed and encouraged, the administration understands the requirement may be an additional burden. The guidelines for student dress code can be found in the Weslaco ISD student handbook and at <https://www.wisd.us/>.

Additionally, to provide families relief from the expenses of school supplies at the elementary level, Weslaco ISD administration is working on securing some basic materials for students. Middle and High Schools will also provide a few supplies as needed. Please expect more information about the basic supplies that will be provided in the near future.

Our principals, administrators, and staff continue to work diligently to ensure our students will have a high-quality, engaging learning experience this school year. Our Board of Trustees and administration continues to keep the safety and well-being of students, staff, families, and community as a top priority. We are looking forward to rolling out our remote instructional plan which will continue Weslaco ISD's almost 100-years of excellence. I personally want to thank you for your patience and understanding as we do our best to respond to the updates and guidance from local and state officials.

Warm regards,



Priscilla Canales, Ph.D