

March 30, 2020

Dear Community, Families, Staff and Students,

I am concerned and anxious about our community and our students. Our community and our district has had to meet challenges we didn't know existed. It is with heartfelt gratitude for our teachers, facilities staff, food service staff and bus drivers, office staff, administrators, and community volunteers that I mention these challenges. Everyone has stepped up to meet the needs of our students and community in ways we never expected we would have to. While this is a national emergency, it is very personal for all of us. We all have family, friends, and people dear to us who are impacted. The loss of life is certainly devastating.

We are all trying to find ways to connect with each other and to provide the necessities of daily life without exposing ourselves or anyone else to disease. To add to these issues some community members have been laid off from their jobs due to the closing of businesses. This is a hard time for our entire community. Nothing is more serious or important to me than making sure our students and their families have what they need during this time. We are living in remarkable days. Schools are closed, parks are closed, jobs are furloughed, establishments are losing business, and we are told to stay at home. This is all very difficult. Some families have four people working at their kitchen table together, each on their own zoom calls/meetings and trying to find ways to focus. Patience is being pushed to its limits. Please know, we are all in this together.

Many parents are worried about their students. The district cannot change some of the outcomes from the mandatory closures of schools and sports. The district can continue to provide as much help as possible during this time. We understand that distance learning opportunities will take time to get used to. We do not expect students and parents to take up the gauntlet of education on their own. The district teachers and staff are guiding the learning and are available to help. We also do not have the same expectations of students working on-line as we would in person. During these difficult times, while students will be expected to participate in their education, they won't be held to every standard as if school were open. Please be patient with us and yourselves, as we are all treading new ground. We have learned so much since this all began.

Please remember, if you are not an essential worker, stay at home as Governor Inslee ordered. Keep your social distancing and practice good hygiene. Wash your hands often. Take care of your families and loved ones first and foremost. This is the number one priority at this time.

Please be assured that we at South Whidbey School District are here to help our families and not to create added anxiety.

South Whidbey School District continues to work to support our South Whidbey community. Every day I am amazed at the stories I hear of community members helping those in need: like those who are sewing masks, like the volunteers at WIN and Good Cheer who continue to make sure all people are fed, like the first responders that are willing to go into the homes to help those who may be suffering from COVID 19, like Cadee distillery producing hand sanitizer and the Goose giving them away free, and all of the health care workers and first responders that go into their jobs everyday facing the virus daily.

We spent the last week working hard to train our staff on the new remote learning model. We are proud of the personal contact our staff provides to our students during the normal school year. Now it is challenging for staff to do this effectively online. As your teachers reach out, please know that they are providing support to parents and students. Please email them your concerns. You are not expected to provide a homeschool curriculum for your child. South Whidbey teachers want to connect to provide a semblance of normalcy for students. They want to provide the students with activities to keep their minds engaged during this closure. They will guide the process. It will be different from typical school and will continue to evolve

Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chris Reykdal, started a video series for parents and students. Please check out the OSPI website. [The first video is linked here.](#)

We at South Whidbey School District want to support you. As you know, we are providing [students meals](#) to ALL CHILDREN AGES 0-18. We have [educational resources online](#) to provide activities for your student to do at home. If you do not have access to the online activities, please reach out to your school principal and they will assist in making access possible. We are here working to support you during this time of difficulty.

Fortunately, our community is caring and pro-active. Please, try not to stress over school related issues. We are all in this together. Call us if you need reassurance or have questions. This is a national health crisis and we do not want to create additional stress over school work, at the same time, engaging in school work does help. The most important thing you all can do is to stay home and stay healthy. We want to support you in whatever way we are able. Please feel free to email me with your comments or questions. Please keep caring for one another and know that we miss having school too.

Additionally, the Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE) has started a community conversation about school closures and how they impact us all. Your feedback matters. Data will be collected and shared with school districts and the community on an ongoing basis to track changes in people's perceptions. **Please complete the survey (2-minutes max) and share this with your friends, family and community.** Survey Link <https://www.research.net/r/CEE-COVID19>

If you have any questions, concerns, thoughts, ideas, suggestions, please contact your teacher via email. If you have any general concerns about your grade level, please contact your principal ([John Patton](#), [James Swanson](#), [Jeff Fankhauser](#), [Susie Richards](#)). If you have any district wide concerns, [please contact me](#). Please hang in there, find time to appreciate and enjoy your loved ones.

Sincerely,

[Dr. Jo Moccia](#)

[Superintendent](#)

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