

Dear Glencoe Families,

I hope this message finds you well and healthy. You all are in my thoughts. I miss the daily connections with kids, families and staff. Early on I enjoyed some of the forced quiet with being at home and being able to connect with my family during the daytime. But, what I soon learned is that I really miss being at school. I have been an educator for 28+ years and I love the energy of a school, more than I realized. I, like all of Glencoe's staff, miss our students terribly and wish we were back amongst the hustle and bustle of the school day.

I am amazed at how quickly our world has changed in such a short time. We left school on March 13th thinking we wouldn't see each other for two weeks. Five days later we learned we wouldn't be together for over a month and now we are looking at the very real possibility that we may not physically come back together this academic year. Each time we heard the news, and our time apart was extended, our hearts broke a little bit more.

I plan to communicate with families weekly from here on out, as I did before in our school newsletter. We are figuring out what this might look like but for now, it will just be an email. I want to apologize up front for the wordiness of this first communication.

So much has happened in such a short time and things continue to change every day. Every time I sit down and type a letter to you, to give you the most up-to-date information, I find that by morning, things have changed and I must revise or start over. Rather than wait any longer, I decided to share with you what we have been up to, how we are planning to support you and your children during this "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order, and what things you can expect (for now) to come your way. Keep in mind that the information may change in the near future, and you will find another email from me in your in-box.

Everyone's world has turned upside down and we are trying to figure out this new-normal in our own ways. With almost 500 kids at Glencoe, and over 40 staff members, I know we are experiencing a variety of feelings. Some of you have scrambled to establish some kind of structure for learning in your own home and some have no idea where to start - both are ok!. Some have tried to figure out what having kids at home and working from home looks like. Some have a great deal of fear and stress. Some are dealing with much uncertainty as one or more of the adults in the home have been laid off. All of these actions and emotions are natural and ok. There is no right or best way to do things right now. The best thing right now, is to be present for your family, your children, and your friends - stay connected and care for each other. The rest will come.

In this time of uncertainty, I am grateful for a wonderful school community, staff and district that cares for each other. I've been communicating with families who are offering to help their friends and neighbors and who want to reach out to other families in crisis. I am talking with staff who want to do the best for their students and families. Teachers are excited to connect with their students and also have times of sadness when they "sign off" or haven't been able to connect with one of their students/families. As you have read from district emails, district personnel have been working tirelessly to distribute food and supplemental materials to families at various school sites throughout the district. Central office folks have been compiling learning resources and preparing materials to support virtual learning activities during this extended closure. I hope we continue to find gratitude and hold each other with grace during these unprecedented times.

As the "extended spring break" came to a close, teachers officially returned to work this week. We had a virtual staff meeting on Monday which was a new process for many. Since then, we have been engaged in 2-3 hours (minimum) of virtual professional development each day learning and enhancing our skills regarding online tools and resources. On Monday, April 6th, we will begin to implement supplemental learning supports for our students beyond what has been distributed at our nutrition sites and on our district website. Unfortunately, we still have many families for which this will be a challenge. We, as a district and school, are still trying to survey

families about their technology needs (including internet access) along with other needs that come with the task of learning at home.

Yesterday, we learned that by state mandate, on Monday, April 13 all districts will move to a “distance learning for all” model. This mandate requires a shift from just offering supplemental learning supports to a distance learning model that will allow for the grading of student work, the assessment of standards, and in the case of our high schools the awarding of credits. With this new challenge comes a long list of questions and concerns, especially for elementary students and students with special needs who need more frequent adult support to learn and complete school work. Our wheels are turning and we are learning and planning as we go. We are also waiting for more guidance and understanding from our district leaders as we prepare for this new way to do school.

At this time, here is what you can expect from us. You can expect weekly communication from me. You can expect that your child’s teacher is working tirelessly to learn and enhance their online skills. You should have already received an email from them this week, checking in, asking if you have access to a device and the internet to engage with learning activities from home. You can expect that on Monday, April 6th you will begin to receive more frequent communication from teachers offering activities and suggestions of supplemental learning activities - not all of which will need to be done online or in front of a screen. If all goes as planned, you can expect us to move to a more structured model of learning by April 13th in which lessons and assignments will be delivered. You can expect a high level of care and responsiveness. Please let me or your child’s teacher know what resources you might need at home to support your child. We will do the best we can to deliver. You can also expect some fun and silly ideas to do at home with the hopes of sharing a picture or email with us (to share on our website) as a way to come together as a community. Like a virtual Spirit Day - stay tuned.

Clearly, there is a lot of work that needs to be done to achieve these new expectations. We will continue to communicate with you and support you, and each other, as we develop this new way of learning for our students. This is another adventure for all of us. One that will be bumpy and filled with a great deal of questions and uncertainty. But we are an inclusive community that cares, collaborates and perseveres - so we will do this, together!

Warm Regards,

Lori Clark

Glencoe Principal