



Family Information Related to COVID-19 and School Closures Bulletin #4 - March 20, 2020

Dear Whitnall Families:

As we head into our official spring break week, I wanted to update you on our plans to continue learning at Whitnall starting on March 30. I am incredibly proud to be part of a community that values learning as much as physical well-being. Our decision to extend our spring break to allow for time to pause and gather the ever-evolving information regarding the pandemic and evaluate our ability to provide quality virtual learning to all of our learners was intentional. And a decision I continue to support.

It may be tempting to just lay technology on top of face-to-face course materials and call it virtual learning. This creates both a frustrating and ineffective learning environment for both teachers and students. When the mode of delivery changes to virtual, the instruction and assessments must also change. Curriculum (standards and learning targets) remain constant. Active learning online includes a mix of discussions, collaboration, video and audio, hands-on activities, and video lessons by the teacher. Our district, like others, was not in a place to make this occur overnight.

We will be using the week of March 30 to focus on training educators on how to design and teach in a virtual environment with gradual implementation of the virtual learning management system with our students. Our plan is to be fully online with K-12 content delivery on April 6. Students will have some virtual activity the week of March 30. We will share what the student expectations for the week of March 30 will be once we have those ready next week.

Family Expectations:

1. We are finalizing student technology needs from the survey that went out earlier this week. The survey closes at noon on Saturday, March 21, so please complete prior to that time. For any families that do not complete the survey, we will have to make individual phone calls.
2. We understand there was some confusion as to the personal belongings pick-up at buildings on Thursday and Friday. The term personal belongings was not consistent nor was the location of those items consistent among buildings. We apologize for the confusion. We needed to get as many personal belongings out of buildings as soon as possible for cleaning and the uncertainty of ability to do so in the near future. Other belongings that were not available for pickup or for students/parents that were unable to collect belongings on Thursday and Friday will be made available in the near future through curbside pickup. Please stay tuned.
3. We are still planning to have technology pick-up and any other belongings that were left as curbside pickup next week. However, that may change if guidelines change. We do not yet have a schedule but the earliest it would begin is on Wednesday, March 25. Please stay tuned.
4. Meal pickup will continue from 11 AM - 12 PM on weekdays, even during spring break, at WHS Main Entrance. You do not need to pre-register and do not need to have a child at Whitnall to pick up the meal nor have children present in the vehicle.

We understand that parents and students may be concerned about loss of learning and the fact that some districts have begun virtual learning already. Our approach and current work is focused on maximizing our virtual learning experience and aligning the learning to academic standards. We also know that school provides a social connection for our students and want to make sure they all can have that connection.

Yesterday, I was able to get into buildings as students, parents, and staff were picking up belongings. There was a general feeling of sadness and emptiness this situation has created. We know that “school” is much more than academic learning. It is the social connections and human interactions. Right now we are all missing that. We will get back there.

Thank you for your continued support through this challenging time. Enjoy spring break and look for more communication next week.



Lisa L. Olson, Ph.D.
Superintendent