

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 47J

www.vernonia.k12.or.us



April 3, 2020

Dear Parents,

Hello. I hope this update finds you safe and well!

Please accept my most sincere thanks for your patience and understanding as we work to meet changing educational guidelines from the State. Our staff is so missing your children and helping them learn. We know these are tough times for everyone, and we are working hard to be part of the solution by staying in touch with our students and families, and by developing some normalcy with regular school routines and activities, even though we are asking you to do them at home due to this health emergency.

Here is the latest update on the State-mandated school closure:

- Each parent in the District should have been contacted by a teacher this week. If you did not talk to at least one of your children's teachers this week, please check your phone messages. The call may have come in showing as a Private Caller. These calls were from a teacher at school trying to personally touch base with each and every parent and student.
 - This initial communication between parent and teacher is extremely important, as weekly communication between parent and teacher is expected throughout this extended school closure to ensure we are meeting the needs of our students.
 - This is a difficult time for both parents and teachers. Parents are being asked to do more with their student's instruction than they are used to providing, and this is not the model for teaching that is most effective, or regularly used by our teaching staff. Many thanks to everyone for your patience, understanding, and hard work to make our efforts as effective as possible.
- The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has mandated all school districts to provide "Distance Learning for All."
 - VSD Teachers are hard at work developing their own plans for how to implement these new remote learning experiences for our students.
 - I will have a more detailed update on our progress and what "Distance Learning for All" will look like in Vernonia, next week.
 - The document can be found on the ODE website. Here is the link to the latest guidance we will be working under,
<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/Pages/Distance-Learning-for-all.aspx>
 - On-line learning resources are already on the District website and available for use. More of these materials will be added daily. While they are available for use, they will not be directly supported by our teaching staff until the official rollout of Vernonia's "Distance Learning for All" on April 13.
- Find messages from our Principals following mine.

Thank you again for your patience through all of this! More on Tuesday. Take care and be well!

Aaron Miller, Superintendent

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From the Staff at Vernonia Middle and High Schools

The staff at VHS/VMS hope everyone is finding a way to stay healthy and find solutions to the current changes in daily life. In keeping with the following ODE directives, staff will begin using online tools to help students stay connected to our curriculum. There is currently a survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9DCDXZ8> for families to get the resources they need during this closure. Please fill out the survey in order to get access to important resources the district can supply.

This past week staff have been busy reaching out in attempt to contact every family personally. They have enjoyed these conversation and appreciate your cooperation and understanding. We are also working on a system for getting students materials from their lockers. We should have a schedule for picking up locker contents sometime next week.

ODE has stated the following:

“As we continue the effective measures of Governor Brown’s “Stay Home, Save Lives” order, we also foresee the strong possibility that our students may not come back through our school house doors this academic year. This calls for a shift from providing supplementary education to a formidable effort to provide Distance Learning for All. (Distance Learning for All: Ensuring Care, Connection and Continuity of Learning: Oregon Department of Education 03/30/2020)

The impact to students during a school closure can be significant. The learning time and support students receive at school are not easily supplemented or replaced.

Understanding the desire and responsibility of parents and educators alike to provide continuity for every student in their learning, many school districts are assessing the feasibility of providing online learning in the event of extended school closures. In looking at this option, it is important to consider the practical steps necessary to appropriately serve every student equitably and the extent to which a traditional school environment can be quickly replicated online. (FAQ for Oregon’s School District Leaders Responding to COVID-19: Last Update: March 16, 2020)”

Please know that Distance Learning is no longer Supplemental Learning activities that are optional, but will require teachers to:

- Publicize grading system with credit earning options for each class (focused on Power Standards) for 30 minute daily lessons
- Evaluate, monitor, provide feedback, and record progress
- Monitor student attendance
- Officially begin 4/13/20

In order to serve students remotely, many staff members will continue to use the Google Classroom platform to deliver instruction. (Students will access classes through their vernoniak12.org account). This will be the most seamless way to incorporate rituals and routines that were established before the closure.

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A list of instructors, with their contact numbers, office hours, classroom codes and learning links, will soon be posted on the District Website and/or made available via hard-copy. Most students are already enrolled in these Google classrooms, and they can be accessed from many devices: tablets, smartphones, laptops etc...please use the next few weeks to communicate with your instructors in order to get caught up on pertinent missing work and be ready to turn in materials on turnitin.com or Google Classroom.

Again, please complete the survey in order for the district to get needed resources to students who need access. (Guardians can receive updates from classes by communicating with instructors and being added via the “invite guardian” function of the classroom). Instructors will still be using Synergy to post grades and communicate in combination with the online tools.

Codes for classrooms can change after a few weeks: please be in contact with your instructors.

If your student was already enrolled in an instructor’s classroom, they do not need to re-enroll.

A good resource to challenge brains on almost any topic can be found at:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/advancedplacement> AP online classes and review questions.

Elementary Distance Learning Plan

We know that this is an extremely challenging time for everyone. Vernonia Elementary and Mist Grade school staff have been working hard to implement distance learning programs for your students at the direction of the governor. Teachers are available through email to answer any questions that you may have.

Teachers will also be connecting weekly with students and families by phone. If your child’s teacher has not already scheduled a time, they will be contacting you to do so. The purpose of this phone call is to gain feedback in how the plan is working and assist teachers in planning for the following weeks.

Our plan is to start small and focus on the power standards that continue to move student learning forward.

K-2 Plan

For the first few weeks, we will be focusing on reading and sharing ECRI (phonics) lessons that students are very familiar with. The weekly lessons will include:

- Directions for families
- 1 page of irregular words for the week
- 1 page of regular words
- 1 page of sounds

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- 1 decodable text
- Alphafriends cards (Kinder only)
- Sound spelling cards (1st and 2nd grade)
- 1 page of dictation
- 1 page of simple comprehension questions to ask your student about the decodable text

During the first few weeks, teachers will be working on firming up math to include in the upcoming weeks.

3rd-5th Grade Plan

This team will provide reading menus for the entire month beginning April 13th. In addition, Leveled Readers will be sent home weekly for reading fluency practice at your child's level. Eventually, these lessons will be scaled up to include vocabulary, comprehension and targeted reading skills.

Math will also be an area of focus but we will start small. Flash cards will be utilized for math fluency practice. In addition to fluency practice, teachers would like families that are able to try Khan Academy online for the first few weeks to see how this platform works.

K-5 Supplemental Resources

Our district webpage has many different supplemental learning resources. We encourage you to spend quality time with your family and take care of each other, find ways to have conversations with your children, play games, and have fun together.

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