WINSKILL ELEMENTARY

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FLYING ARROWS

Dear Winskill Families,

I hope this letter finds you well and in a positive frame of mind. These are undoubtedly challenging times but try not to let fear or negativity overcome you. Even though I encourage everyone to face the reality of the current situation and take the necessary precautions, I also encourage you to stay optimistic. We WILL get through this together. Nurture your inner grit. You and your family will be stronger when we come out on the other side of this challenge.

Through these uncharted waters, we are continuing to look for ways to improve students' access to learning but in a way that is not overwhelming or stressful to students, parents, and families. As this situation has continued to change, our approach to school-to-home learning will as well. Our top priority continues to be on who we are teaching over what we are teaching.

The vision statement for our school district points out that we strive to nurture personalized success. Every family is in a different situation and has different levels of needs our school can fulfill. Please know that we are here to help in any way we can. If you need us to provide a daily schedule or ideas for educational opportunities, then we certainly will. If you need us to be there for advice with mental health for your child or someone in your family, please ask. If you need us to leave you alone because the stresses in your life are really high and added schoolwork would be the straw that breaks the camel's back, that's what we will do. At this time, our community needs to be here for each other to help support each other while keeping safety and staying healthy as our number one objective.

Moving forward, Winskill staff will continue their office hours from 10 a.m. - Noon. In every grade level, we've also created times when students can join all of their classmates as a larger group to connect, as well as get an opportunity to see other teachers, like their specials teachers. Our teachers will have engaging learning activities planned for the entire group during those times. The purpose of the class sessions is to keep the connections between students and their teachers. You can see the attached schedule where kids have the option to Zoom into their class as a group.

The packet that was sent home on March 18th provided learning activities that you can continue if they are working for your family. These packets included online resources for different subjects. Please reach out to us if access to the internet or devices is an issue. We will help you with that. We want you to view these resources as educational opportunities and not things that are required.

We want to personalize education to what your family needs right now, but we want you to understand that we will not be teaching new content as not all students would receive it equitably. Any learning opportunity we provide will be based on skills previously learned.

Instead of a focus on education, I encourage you to focus on becoming stronger and tighter-knit as a family. Play board games together, go outside and fly a kite, teach your kids how to bake, read together, eat dinner as a family, build some crafts, etc. Find ways to connect at a deeper level with your family.

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Our number one priority as a nation needs to be doing what we need to do to stop the spread of the coronavirus. This moment in history is something that we will all always remember. My hope is that our families and our kids will look back at this and think of it as a positive learning experience because it taught us many things about life and brought families closer together. Life has changed for all of us. When I wrote about facing reality, the fact is we are in a national emergency and we are encouraged to stay home. In many ways, we have been forced to slow down our life and now we get to spend more time at home with our family. Let's look at that as a positive and be grateful. Let's use this time, not to advance academically in math and reading, but to grow as a family and become stronger as a community.

It is very unfortunate that our kids will miss out on several weeks of instruction time at school with their teachers. With that being said, everyone is in the same boat in our country. I assure you that when we do get back to school, our boat will back up to where our kids are academically, let them board and we will then move forward from where they are at. We will take care of that part when that exciting time comes. Until then, take care. We love and miss our students. We would love to have life back to normal and all of our students back at school. Until that time comes, stay safe, and take advantage of the slower pace of life and the extra time with your family.

Kind Regards,

Brad Sturmer