

## COVID-19 UPDATE: April 3, 2020

It feels like a long time since the last update and the rapid rate of changes occurring around us has created a slower rate of communication. Thank you for your patience. For clarity, we began preparing as a district to serve our students in a specific way during this pandemic. With unexpected news arriving late Monday evening (March 30), we have had to reverse some of our preparations and begin again. We want to produce the best outcome for students as quickly as possible and have been focusing on that so much that we have been slower in our communication. We are still committed to communication and will strive to ensure that it is the most accurate information available. There are still several issues looming that we are waiting to hear about. One example is the pathway for seniors to graduate. We have been hearing from community that these looming issues are on their minds as well. Once we have accurate information to share, we will do it. Thank you for all of your patience and support during this time.

The unexpected change we experienced on Monday (March 30) night was a shift from providing supplementary instruction to Distance Learning for All (DLA). Supplementary instruction might be seen as more “optional” or “review type” of materials that students had already learned. Essentially, Distance Learning for All (DLA) is focused on continuing to provide instruction while realizing that the student and instructor are not in the same classrooms.

The primary reasoning for DLA was a concern about continuity. DLA will support kids from now until the end of the school year; regardless of where students and staff are located. The change to DLA by the state was in preparation that there is a “strong possibility” that buildings will stay closed for remainder of the 19-20 school year. School will look different if the buildings close through summer but DLA will ensure that education can continue and services that students need can find new ways to be made available. We are committed to providing you accurate details about what is happening with our buildings and school program during the closure. This is the most accurate info we have at this time.

DLA implementation resulted in some changes to efforts the district was making but not to our overall intention. On Monday March 30<sup>th</sup>, staff were assigned the task of making contact with every single student in our district. In some cases, this meant that households were contacted multiple times. We believe in the value of this for several reasons. The simplest are that staff missed the students and we heard over and over that students were missing their staff. This connection is one of the strongest values that schools possess and one of our most important functions.

When we returned from “spring break”, we felt the importance of connecting with one another and trying to restore as much to our school community as possible given the unique situation we were in. So, we started making phone calls. And we will continue to call. Calling will be one of the most important things that we do. Students need to know that staff are still working and that school is still there...it just looks different for the time being. Once (when) school resumes, seeing one another on a daily basis will return to normal. Until then, phone calls, video meetings, virtual connecting will take the place of staying connected. Even before DLA, Reedsport School District was on the right track as this approach to “care and connection” are

the starting points for DLA. With that in mind, students should expect no less than one phone/video call and personal connection per week. In many cases, students will have many more. WE are committed to this communication with all of our students.

## **WHAT ARE TEACHERS DOING RIGHT NOW?**

Staff have three focus tasks they are doing right now in addition to redesigning how school can happen at a distance. The first task is grades. We know that we need to keep track of where students left off on March 12. This will help us moving forward. April 3 was a scheduled grading day and that is still happening. Once that task is complete, staff will be moving on to conferences. Highland staff will be calling/connecting with all of their classroom. RCCS staff will be contacting at least 25 students each as determined in their staff decision making process. WE know we need to inform families where their students are at educationally and will use this as another platform to stay connected. The third task will be to roll out instruction to meet the expectations of DLA. Staff are all in different stages of these three tasks. This means that the date that students receive materials in their home will vary as a result.

Materials for instruction will begin arriving as soon as teachers are able to provide them. Some teachers are already prepared to push out initial materials and guidance to students. These items will start being available on April 6. Other teachers are still working on their materials. The absolute latest date any teacher's initial materials and guidance will be available is April 13. Because different grade levels, different subjects, different workloads, and other reasons exist in the district, staff will be staggered in their delivery of instruction. They want to get items out as badly as students want to start receiving materials. This might look like students in the same household (in different classes) getting materials and guidance for instruction on different dates.

Meals will continue and we are working on a revised and improved system. We listened carefully to the input that families gave us in the surveys and are using it guide how we provide meal service. This revised system will include delivery to an increased number of bus stop locations, possible delivery to driveways, and long-term delivery models. Food service is working as we speak with our transportation contractor to determine the most efficient and helpful way to increase our service and delivery options.

As we work with our transportation contractor for food delivery, we are also trying to plan the most efficient way to deliver any materials from the school that students will need during DLA. The most obvious would be either Chromebook for some students OR paper packets (as determined by the staff providing the instruction). It is likely that the same stops used to deliver meals will also be used (and possibly at the same time) for delivery of materials. Many students will do one of three things as school buses make deliveries. First would be to collect a meal. Second would be to collect materials. Third would be to collect both a meal and materials. Each students' individual needs will be met on this. It is important to know that only one member of a household would need to go collect materials or meals. If families with 2 or more students have only one student collect food and materials, we will all be safer and able to better practice social distancing. There is no need to each student receiving a meal to be present at this time in order to receive a meal.

WE appreciate all of the feedback we have received so far. As we grow in our commitments to serving our staff and students, we want to continue to take your feedback and listen to your needs. We will maintain our commitment to communicating the most accurate information we have to you in a timely manner. Thank you for your grace and support in these unprecedented times. WE will come out of this stronger because of everything we are learning from and growing toward. Thank you for your help in moving us forward.