

Sunita Williams Elementary School
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Good morning everyone,

As current events continue to bring new challenges to our community, our country and our world, I trust you are all doing your best to cope and adapt to this extraordinary "new normal." I know you received a communication from Superintendent Dan Gutekanst last night. I also want families to be assured that our staff and I are meeting regularly to support our students remotely until we can all physically be back in our school building together. We are also trying to support but not overwhelm you all in our effort to keep students engaged in appropriate academic and social activities. To this end I will ask you to again look at the superintendent's email and then look at the following things specific to our community which I feel deserve inclusion, reiteration or clarification.

Let's start with an important set of resources for those families put together by our counselors, Maragret Petrovich and Meg Flatley, to help with managing your child(ren)'s emotions, talking with your child(ren) about the Coronavirus, and tips for parenting with your children home all day. Click this link, [SWES Home Support and Services](#) to access the document.

As mentioned in Dan's email, families with elementary students will receive a curated list of resources by this Friday to look at over the weekend and get a sense of some of the many resources available to you. Dan also referred to the schools' individual Technology Center websites for other general resources which can be accessed immediately but please note that not every digital tool will work with every device you have at home.

Beginning Monday, March 23rd, homeroom teachers will be emailing you daily Morning Meeting messages with more specific activities for students. These messages will be sent each school day between 8 and 8:30 am and will also contain messages from the specialist teachers with things to do at home for the arts, wellness, media, STEAM, and Spanish. While it is important to note that, at this point in time, *all the learning opportunities are recommended but not required and work will not be graded nor will we introduce new curriculum or new units of study*, parents and students can still email teachers with questions or wonderings. As with any email correspondence, please allow teachers at least 48 hours to respond.

Some activities, especially in the younger grades, will not require a computer. However, given the fact that many will, I feel it's vitally important to reiterate another important section of Dan's email; *Learning from home is a solution to the need for social distancing, but social connection is an important protective factor for all of us. Our challenge is to find new ways to connect because it is risky for children to hang out in large groups or be together on the playground which is why all schools and playgrounds have been closed.* I agree wholeheartedly with that statement but also want to stress the importance of continued vigilance of your children's online experiences. We have had recent incidents at SWES involving inappropriate use of

technology by some of our students and also discovered some are accessing wildly inappropriate websites which can lead to safety issues (cyberbullying and exposure to hateful and developmentally inappropriate content now, and eventually endangering them physically once we are able to get back to socializing in person). So while the internet can certainly be a useful tool, especially now with social distancing being a necessity, please remember how important it is to monitor your child's internet activity. This was to be the topic of our next PTC meeting and will be on the agenda for a future meeting.

Finally, I want you to feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Teachers will also forward me any questions or concerns from families that they cannot address directly. I will do my best to get back to you via email as quickly as possible or by telephone if that is more appropriate (with the latter in mind, please include the best times and best number to reach you). I will be checking email regularly and having frequent conversations with PTC presidents, Vanessa Jones and April Crawford.

In the meantime, I again send you my best wishes for staying safe and sane during this truly trying time.

Love,
Mr. K