

March 27, 2020

Dear Panther Nation,

Yesterday, the Commissioner of Education released guidelines for remote learning during the extended school closure. The WHRSd leadership team is meeting remotely today to discuss how we will adjust our expectations according to the guidelines. The priority of our team has been the physical and emotional health of our community during this health crisis. We will now try and infuse even more academic structure, into the social/emotional connections teachers have made with their students. We will communicate changes to our plan and rollout early next week.

The response to the availability of district chrome books has been extensive. Today, I anticipate close to 300 devices being picked up at the high school. If more are needed after tomorrow we will continue to fill orders as best we can. As an added FYI, the district budget does not fund these devices. They were purchased by PTO's and a grant from the state. The devices that have been loaned out are valued at \$80,000. Please take good care of them while they are loaned out. For those of you picking up a device, I ask for patience. We created a pick up procedure that will keep both parents and staff safe. This is new for us and there might be some bugs. Please know we are doing the best we can. I mentioned that more than 4,000 calls were received by our help desk. My technology folks are a bit overwhelmed as this was department that felt a budget cut last year.

Many families have signed up for food service. Please, if you are in need, let me know [Jeffrey.szymaniak@whrsd.org](mailto:Jeffrey.szymaniak@whrsd.org) and I will add you to the list. We will get through this together.

On Wednesday evening, at their virtual meeting, the School Committee supported my recommendation to suspend collecting K and Pre-K tuition and to reimburse for days already paid during the closure (less the four snow days that will be made up at end of June). More details are soon to follow.

The past two weeks have been extremely challenging for us as a country, state, town and school district. I can assure this community that my staff is working hard trying to figure out and deliver an experience for your child that they will remember when they turn 30.

As you know, today is a half day grading day. Parents, you've earned this half day and I won't even ask you to submit your grades to me. Honestly, I'm very afraid of what you might send me. As Superintendent I would like to give each of you a "A" for effort; Not sure I can grade you on conduct yet, as I saw a couple of social media posts about a very early happy hour!

Enjoy your weekend and stay safe and healthy, #PantherNation  
Jeff Szymaniak, Superintendent of Schools  
Whitman-Hanson Regional School District  
@WH\_Super



#### In 2030

**College kid:** "In history class, we learned that the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020 was really bad. What was it like?"

**Parent:** "Well, everything was shut down in an attempt to kill the virus, but not everyone followed the order to quarantine for 15 days, so it lasted longer than anyone expected. Many people died who shouldn't have. Grocery stores were out of everything because people were hoarding as much as they could. We were scared of economic failure for our country and for ourselves because we couldn't work. Don't you remember it? You were 8."

**College kid:** "All I remember was the school closing and being homeschooled. I remember doing scavenger hunts in our yard. I remember eating meals as a family for a change. I remember getting great sleep because I wasn't up late for homework or getting up early for school. I remember board games as a family. I remember watching our pastor on our laptop. Honestly, it was the happiest time of my childhood."