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Michelle Dutrow, Superintendent

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Good Afternoon West Branch Families:

I hope you are all settled in for what appears to be a big snow event! I know for many adults this is just another added stress during an already difficult time. But I want to remind you that snow events are a magical time for children and right about now it is a much-needed diversion from all the other ugliness around them. Hope you can take a few minutes to just enjoy the wonder of the snow and the quietness and tranquility it brings.

Today's communication provides you with some updates as we continue our Full Remote plan for the foreseeable future.

Attendance Requirements

We have received comments from some students and families that they are not going to do the remote instruction. During the summer, every school district in Pennsylvania was required to submit a plan to the Department of Education that outlined our COVID-19 plans for 1) In-person Hybrid model, 2) Staggered Day Hybrid model, and 3) Full Remote model. For each of these plans, the district had to guarantee that all laws pertaining to school attendance would be maintained regardless of the model being implemented. As such, all students are legally required to participate in the Full Remote model as designed. Accommodations will be made for those who do not have internet access either via a hotspot or packets. Failure to participate will impact a student's grades and all legal procedures will be adhered to. It is your responsibility to contact the school if you need assistance. You may direct your request to your child's Principal.

Technology Issues

We certainly understand that technology is great when it works, but in a rural area such as ours, there will be glitches and issues we must work through. If you are having an issue with either your child's device or connectivity, please submit a ticket to our tech staff at support@westbranch.org. We have staff assigned to address tickets each day, Monday-Friday from the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Feeding Program

We are making some alterations to our feeding program to better serve your needs. Starting this Friday, December 18th, we will be using our bus runs to deliver the meals to our bus stops throughout the District. We hope this new arrangement will be more convenient for our families who struggled to get to the school to pick up meals. For each of our deliver dates between now and when we reopen, we will be sending out the buses from the school at 2:45 p.m. and stopping at all stops from both our MS/HS run and Elementary run. Because we are combining the two runs, we may be arriving later that you would normally expect. Please plan to arrive at the bus stop based on the time it usually takes the bus to get from the school to your stop each afternoon (for example 20 minutes added onto 2:45 p.m.) and then understand we may be up to about 15 additional minutes later as we distribute food at the earlier stops.

The delivery dates that we have coming up are as follows:

Friday, December 18, 2020
Tuesday, December 22, 2020
Tuesday, January 5, 2021
Friday, January 8, 2021

We will be providing breakfast and lunch for 7 days per week during the weeks when school will be in session. If you would like to receive the meals starting this Friday afternoon, please email kmartin@westbranch.org by 8:00 a.m. Friday morning. We will need the names of all the children in the home (Ages 2-18) along with the grade level so we can keep the required documentation.

Snowstorm and Connectivity

We do realize that today's storm may impact internet connectivity for tomorrow for select students. We ask families to try to log in tomorrow for remote instruction. If you run into issues, we simply ask you periodically check to see if you can log in. We may also have staff who have some connectivity issues tomorrow, so your patience is requested. We will try our best to get the day in using our remote model.

Thank you.
Micki Dutrow