



NEW BRAUNFELS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Randy Moczygemba
Superintendent of Schools

April 6, 2020

Dear NBISD Parents/Guardians:

I would like to thank you for participating in our ThoughtExchange regarding how we are doing during the COVID-19 closure. We have had over 1,339 people participate. You have shared 1,375 thoughts with us and there are more than 42,437 ratings. We are already reviewing your thoughts and ideas. This information will help us to monitor and make adjustments in the services that we are providing to your students during these challenging times.

One area of concern that we are seeing is grades and grading. While we still do not have all of the answers, I would like to share with you the facts and decisions that we have at this time.

School districts were not given any direction on closure prior to March 27. These decisions were made individually by the school districts. NBISD and Comal ISD met with other school districts in our area on Thursday, March 12. We made the unilateral decision to close our districts effective March 16. This was the right decision and the right time.

The initial communication from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), during the week of March 16, was that we should provide educational opportunities for our students to keep them from regressing during the closure. At that time, no one expected this closure to be long term.

TEA has since given direction to districts that we must provide Instructional Continuity to our students through the entirety of this closure. They produced a training series that all districts participated in daily last week, March 30 through April 3. The TEA website for is open to the public and may be accessed at this link: <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/instructional-continuity-planning-framework>

According to the Texas Education Agency, “The purpose of Instructional Continuity planning is to help districts launch “at-home Schools” that maximize the amount of instructional time for students this school year and support student mastery of grade-level standards.” At the time of closure, we were entering the fourth quarter of the year with 25% of the course content yet to be covered.

NBISD made the decision upfront to maximize the amount of instructional time for students this school year and support student mastery of grade-level standards. We chose to “boldly go” where others did not. Our students are way ahead of the curve.

Some districts are not rolling out this level of instruction until mid-April. This puts their students a month behind ours.

We are concerned about student success and the integrity of grades that are not monitored. This will be an ongoing discussion with the priority of making sure that it is fair and equal to all students. We believe that grades are important for now as a tool to assess student understanding so that we can provide support to parents and students that need them. One decision that has been made is that all grades given will be daily grades. We do not want to put the added stress on your child(ren) of major grades.

Student completion of assignments is essential to help us determine grade placement (promotion and retention) for elementary students and for course credit for middle school and high school students. We need your support and involvement in encouraging your child(ren) to complete their assignments.

Please understand that our electronic grade book system is a part of a statewide student software package. It was not designed to be changed significantly in a situation such as this closure. This is a real challenge for us and is causing confusion for parents as well. TEA is requiring progress reports to go out as they normally would. This is also a challenge, due to the software and the situation itself.

You will receive progress reports tomorrow. Please keep the above challenges in mind and do not be overly concerned. If you do have concerns when you receive your child's progress report, assignments, or grades, please continue to reach out to your child's teacher either through e-mail or by calling their normal classroom phone.

I will end this message as I have over the last few days. Please "Stay Home, Stay Safe." Information from the State of Texas indicates that these measures have helped to "flatten the curve". The number of COVID-19 cases in Texas continues to increase daily, but not as many new cases as we were seeing in the last two weeks. This is good news!! **#StayHomeUnicorns**

Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,
Randy Moczygamba
Superintendent of Schools