

October 9, 2020

Dear RA families,

In our third week together, students and adults continue to learn and grow in the remote environment. During our staff meeting this week, teachers reported many highlights, as well as areas of opportunity. We thought you might be interested in seeing some:

- “The students are doing a great job learning the technology and getting into a rhythm.”
- “Supply pick up is not happening the same at all schools, and I don’t know who has picked up some materials.”
- “It is very challenging to support students with tech issues when they are using so many different devices (their own).”
- “Using breakout rooms and students helping one another with technology has gone well.”
- “The staff has been collaborating well and has been diligent in their approach to adjusting to this new virtual format and helping their students adapt to these changes.”
- “Students in my class from different schools are getting to know each other and making new friends! It’s been awesome to see them make new connections.”
- “Students sharing their screens and helping their classmates through technology.”
- “Small groups and staying consistent with our routines. Kids are starting to get to know each other and opening up - it’s great to see!”
- “Great lessons and resources for lessons for different subject areas.”
- “Large group work has been challenging but we’re getting better every day.”
- “Staying connected to home schools and the RA has been difficult. There is an overwhelming amount of coordination and communication.”
- “We need more support getting supplies to schools that are not our home school.”
- “The families have been very supportive!”

Reflecting on teacher feedback, as well as what we’ve heard from parents, we are pleased that students and teachers are settling into their new routines and continuing to adapt to remote learning. We cannot adequately thank the teachers for their tireless dedication to bringing engaging, student-centered lessons to our children every day and the amount of time that it takes to do that. We are incredibly thankful for them.

We, administrators, have more work to do. To support our teachers and families, we will focus on clearer communication with regards to Remote Academy and the 7 other elementary schools. We understand that information overload and/or conflicting information is confusing and frustrating. We also will use feedback to refine our distribution system that gets materials from different departments into the hands of our 875 students.

Thank you, families, for supporting us through this process and providing the feedback that will help us continue to improve. Growing pains are no fun but we will be better for them!

As we move into our fourth week of remote learning, we encourage adults at home to begin to give your student space during their school day. We understand that our youngest learners still may need support moving between activities, but we hope that students will become increasingly independent and able to either manage their transitions/work or ask their peers or teacher for help. When students are having challenges with technology during the school

day, parent assistance may be required to give students access to learning; however, if a child has a question about lesson or activity, that would be directed to the teacher. This is an unusual moment in education where families can be present in their child's classroom. Teachers need to be able to get an accurate idea of what each child is able to do independently, what he understands, and the skills she needs to practice. While it is a delicate balance, we know that struggles, mistakes, challenges, and risks are all an important part of a child's growth and development. A lot of learning happens in those uncomfortable moments and we know your child's teacher will be there to help.

Nuts and Bolts to Know

- Teachers will have times during the day when they need to attend meetings to support students. At those times, your child will have asynchronous work to do and teachers will return to class as soon as they can.
- There will be days that your child's teacher will be out. We do not have substitute teachers for remote learners (in RA or in the hybrid model on the remote days), so there will be asynchronous lessons that day. Teachers will let you know when they'll be out and lessons will be delivered through Google Classroom.
- We will have a date/time for our RA Curriculum Night soon; expect that it will be sometime in the last week of October.

Thank you all for the work you do at home and for sharing your children with us. They really are the best part of our job.

We hope you enjoy your long weekend and happy Indigenous People's Day on Monday.

Be well,

Sam and Eva