



Greetings DeSmet Families,

It goes without saying that these are unprecedented times. The school has been engaged in distance learning since spring break. It was a difficult transition, but the staff and students pivoted on a dime and made it happen. I don't believe it would have happened so successfully without the support of the parents, kudos to all of you, you're magnificent.

The governor has asked all school districts to make a decision on how the rest of the year will unfold; in-school or distance learning. Weighing the dangers and benefits, and the short time we have left in the school year, it is in the best interest of the children, parents and their extended families that we continue our distance learning program through the end of the school year. I know the staff deeply misses their students, and I am sure the students miss their classmates and teachers also, but the risk of reopening to on sight learning doesn't outweigh the benefit.

I have asked the teachers to keep the children focused and on track. The specials teachers (art, music, PE, drama, library, and counseling) were asked to give the students one 30 minute project to do per week. I also asked them to give the students a choice of a few options each week. You should notice that each week, each special has several options, remember to choose just one for each special.

I have asked that all core teachers have an hour of math and English Language Arts every day. I have also been asked to reiterate that there are a few universals that each student must master. Math Facts, reading comprehension and writing.

- We are all at different levels, so master your math facts for your level, we have flashcards, on-line apps, whatever it takes; we will help you. You should spend 15 minutes each day on your drills until they are mastered (that means no finger counting or umms, you have it down pat or you do not)
- Reading comprehension is being able to discuss what a student just read.
- Writing complete sentences is neat hand writing with: a noun, a verb and making sense.

All our parent-pros are doing a great job, it is hard work and I thank you for stepping up. Patience, compassion and an understanding that it's all good will guide us through the next several weeks. Don't worry, we got your back. This may be different, but it is an adventure that will be told in stories many years from now. Please touch base with Ms. Richards if you have any questions.

Sincerely, Matt Driessen