



Mountain Brook  
SCHOOLS

April 3, 2020

MBS Family,

For many families, it has been particularly challenging to interpret exactly what is meant by “new normal” in so many different aspects of our lives. In our community this has been particularly pressing when considering what school might look like moving forward. While we fully acknowledge that school will look different, it is important that our families know we are no less dedicated to partnering with them to continue supporting the growth and learning for our students. Over the course of this process we anticipate a host of new learning and questions to emerge for all of us, but this communication is directed to answering a few fundamental questions as we begin this new phase of our partnership.

### **What does eLearning actually mean for our students?**

It has been nothing short of inspirational to see our teachers collectively develop a structure to support our students’ learning in the coming weeks. On Monday our district will officially launch an elementary eLearning plan that focuses on communicating, instructing, and providing feedback to our students about their work. Learning will be focused around growth of essential literacy and numeracy skills through online and off-line learning opportunities. Teachers will provide learning that will be recorded and posted for students to complete during the recommended learning window. The learning sessions will be determined and communicated by grade level teams. Assignments should be posted and completed over the span of one week.

### **When does eLearning happen each day?**

It is entirely possible that teachers will suggest a recommended pacing and structure for learning throughout the week, but we also want to be sensitive to the needs and schedules of our families. The benefit of having recorded instruction and independent work is providing families needed flexibility within the parameters of the expectations communicated weekly by teachers. Though different for every family, the recommended work should typically total between two and three hours daily and include a variety of learning opportunities across content areas and disciplines. Required academic work will include assignments in reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and physical education, but you may also see optional learning opportunities under the heading of “flex learning.” Although “flex learning” activities will be optional, they will provide opportunities for extension in music, art, Spanish, and much more.

## **What about grades?**

To this point our teachers have provided optional suggestions for families to learn. Though a different (and more flexible) format, April 6 begins a new phase of eLearning that is meant to mirror the participation and expectations associated with school. To that end, teachers will be communicating feedback needed to customize learning. For a more detailed explanation of our plan for grading and feedback, please see our [Elementary Grading and Assessment Plan](#).

## **What are the next steps?**

We realize that there are a number of lingering questions about collecting student materials, turning in library books, etc. that will be answered soon. However, our first priority is to ensure that students have access to Chromebooks in order to support the eLearning platform. Schools will be communicating a plan to distribute remaining Chromebooks if needed.

## **Are we ready?**

Yes. Our partnership has carried us this far and will continue to be vital to your child's success. Our teachers and staff have worked tirelessly over the last weeks to create a platform for this ambitious undertaking. That said, we fully realize that we will continue to evolve and improve over the course of this process. Whether 'live' or virtually, we will grow the same way we always do.... together.

All the best,

Dicky Barlow  
Superintendent  
Mountain Brook Schools