

August 19, 2020

Dear Parents of GDS Students,

Hello everyone! Here it is, Wednesday Correspondence!

Today's correspondence will begin to cover Device and Material Distribution, Students Fees, School Nutrition, Face to Face Instruction explanation, Registration, Back to School Night plans, Attendance for students, Supply Lists, and a few other important items.

At GDS our plan is to have a Device and Materials pick up on Thursday, August 27th from 12:00 PM to 7:00 PM. We will send out a detailed message on just this as we get the day planned. The distribution will look similar to our other distributions, where we will have areas set up in the parking lot for you to safely get your items while staying in your car. Please watch for this message before the end of this week.

Please read through the acceptable use policy, [MG Device Handbook](#) either here or in our student handbook. If you have questions please give us a call. Our planner has a handbook in it, but the acceptable use policy has changed a bit since our planner was printed, this version, and the version on our school website is correct.

Student fees for 2020-2021 have been waived for all students in grades T4K - 12.

School Nutrition Information:

This fall's school nutrition program will look different than the spring meal program that we were able to offer to all families free of charge. We are currently in the process of finalizing all the details but wanted to provide some initial information. Our goal is to release additional information the week of August 24th.

Last spring, the National School Lunch Program through the USDA, provided school districts with waivers that allowed us to serve meals to any child and at no charge. These same waivers have not been approved by the USDA for any school district. This limits some of what we can offer and provide.

Key updates:

1. The meal program will be available only to children who:
  - are in grades 4K-12 or students aged 19-21 who have not yet graduated, AND
  - are enrolled and attending school in the Monona Grove School District.
2. Meals will only be free to individuals that qualify for free and reduced school meals.

3. Families that don't qualify for free and reduced school meals will be charged the [regular meal rates](#). Meals will continue to be paid for via Infinite Campus. [Click here](#) for instructions on how to add money to your child's food service account.
4. Families will have to sign up for meals for each child who needs a meal. More details on this will be shared next week.
5. Only a parent, guardian or the student can pick up or accept a meal.

Anyone may apply for free and reduced meals at any time during the school year. If you feel that you may qualify, please complete and submit a free and reduced application or contact Terri O'Neil at [terri.oneil@mgschools.net](mailto:terri.oneil@mgschools.net) or (608)316-1894. Printable applications can be found [here](#), online applications can be found [here](#).

Those who received benefits in the 2019-20 school year will need to reapply prior to October 12, 2020, to avoid a lapse in benefits unless they have received a letter this school year saying their children are already approved for free or reduced meals.

#### Face to Face Instruction:

Last week, the School Board was presented with a draft plan for a continuum of services, including very limited face to face instruction.

- Virtual learning 2.0 is not the same as emergency virtual learning provided in Spring 2020. Our goal is that this improved model will be effective for the majority of our students including our students with disabilities.
- Face to face instruction will be very limited and will be the exception, not the rule for students with disabilities (and all students) to start the year.
- Families of students with disabilities will receive more detailed information from the student services team by the week of August 24th. Specific questions in the interim should be directed to your child's case manager.

#### Back to School Night:

Our staff is working feverishly trying to plan some back to school night activities that families can access both synchronously and virtually on Wednesday, August 26th. You will be hearing from our student services team and your child's teacher on how this will look and work for you by the end of the day Tuesday, August 25th.

During our first week of school, we will provide a modified schedule, where we will run through shortened classes in the morning and then our teachers are going to do their very best to meet with each individual student family in the afternoons. We will provide a sign up genius with more specifics next week, but this is the avenue for us to learn more about your child, help answer any questions you may have, and be able to provide you with any resources you may

need. We understand that all families have a lot going on and this is one way for us to start to work together right from the beginning!

#### Online Registration:

Due to the number of changes families are being asked to navigate this year, we are not requiring parents/guardians to complete the full annual online registration. Parents should review their contact information in the Campus Parent Portal. If needed, information is available in the portal that outlines how to request changes.

#### Attendance:

Attendance policies are complex and affect many aspects of school and student life. There are many moving parts and we know families and schools alike are juggling competing priorities. Attendance may look a bit different between elementary grades and secondary grades.

Grade 5: These are unusual circumstances, and we understand the need for grace and flexibility. We are firmly committed to working with families to ensure your child is able to participate in their learning. We are also committed to offering flexibility in determining what works best for you and your family. Our goal is to be sure you and your family have the resources and support you need, not to mark your child's grades lower or mark a student as truant. If you have questions or concerns about attendance, please contact your child's teacher or principal.

Grades 6 - 8: DPI has informed us that additional guidance will be coming soon regarding attendance; when we have more information we will update you.

Lastly, specific to GDS, our goal is to open up Infinite Campus to all families on Friday. I would like you to understand that we have totally rebuilt our master schedule and therefore have had to make a lot of changes. We have over 900 students at GDS this fall, there will be some small issues when we open this up I am sure. We do not guarantee parent requests, and we do not make changes because of the magnitude of our scheduling needs. If we did something wrong on your child's schedule **please email me**, and I will work with our team to get it taken care of as soon as I can.

GDS School supply lists have been updated on our website for virtual learning. If your child needs any of these supplies, please contact us and we will help in any way we can! The Cottage Grove Lions Club not only donated materials for our students, but also some money that we can use to purchase items our students need. It takes a village to raise our students, and we are so fortunate to have such a wonderful community!

I am working with staff to ensure that everything we send home in the next 2 weeks is efficient and is necessary. So please stay abreast of correspondence from GDS as we transition into Virtual 2.0!

If you have questions please do not hesitate to call me at 608-839-8408, I will return your call as soon as possible.

We miss you!

*Kris*

Kristen R. Langer, Principal