

Good afternoon, WCSD Family—

Last week was a busy one for our entire district as Gov. Sisolak announced that we will join with all Nevada school districts in finishing the year using [Distance Learning](#). We know you, our students, and our families are disappointed, but everyone's health and safety are our highest priority.

- With the governor's announcement, we are exploring options for **graduation ceremonies**. We have been working closely with the Student Advisory Board to exchange ideas and hear their questions and concerns. It is such a special time for our graduating seniors, and we will do all we can to celebrate their accomplishment with our students, families, and staff members. Stay tuned for more details as we work together to make these important plans.
- Graduation plans are certainly on the minds of many people, as I learned during last week's **Virtual Forum**. There were also a lot of questions about Distance Learning and I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to provide information to our community in this virtual setting. I look forward to more of these as we move forward and make plans during this unprecedented time in our District and our community at large.
- We have so many amazing counselors doing inspiring work in our schools and now is the time to honor them (virtually). Nominations are open for the **Nevada School Counselor of the Year Award**, which honors counselors who run a top-notch comprehensive school counseling program at either the elementary-, middle-, or high school level. School administrators, teachers, counselors, and other school personnel are welcome to nominate an outstanding school counselor. Please review the award eligibility and criteria [here](#), click on the [Nominate a School Counselor](#) link, and complete and submit the Google Form **by April 30, 2020**. Your nominee will receive a notification via email and will be asked to complete the online application process.
- Our admin staff, principals, and teachers have done an incredible job of creating, compiling, and providing **Distance Learning** materials to our students, and school staff members continue to keep up the effort with daily contact with our students. We have achieved a **96 percent engagement rate** with our students, and I could not be more proud and grateful for the hard work that led to this amazing outreach effort. As you know, the state has asked school districts to contact students at least weekly, but most WCSD students are receiving daily contact from teachers and staff! This is such important work, as our staff and students embrace a new way of teaching and learning together.
- Business and Finance Office staff members continue to work on our budget for the coming school year. In light of the continuing challenges posted by the COVID-19 crisis, there will likely be changes coming, although at this point it is unclear what those will entail. We are working closely with the state to determine whether and how our funding will change and will be sure to keep our District family apprised as we move forward.
- The offices of Academics, School Leadership, Accountability, and Information Technology have collaborated to provide direction for all grade levels on **spring semester grading**. Teachers are receiving guidance and will collaborate with their school leaders to ensure grading guidelines are implemented in an equitable manner throughout our District. It is important to know that stakeholder input was included in finalizing grading guidelines, including suggestions and input from our employee associations.
- Our partnership between **WCSD Nutrition Services and the Food Bank of Northern Nevada** continues to thrive. Last week we served a record number of 1,652 students in one day. Every child received multiple breakfasts and lunches at each of 24 sites across the District. Many thanks to our employees in Nutrition Services who continue to go above and beyond in their efforts to provide healthy food to our children. Also, a shout out to our employees in the [Intervention Department](#) for their amazing work in providing food to families from our mobile pantries: last Thursday, they distributed groceries to 713 households at the Desert Skies Middle School site!
- **Visiting schools** is one of the most enjoyable parts of my work, and I'm so glad I've been able to continue to "virtually" visit schools while Distance Learning is underway. I visited students and staff at Brown and Booth elementary schools, Galena High School, and Sky Ranch Middle School via Zoom, and it was wonderful to see firsthand how our staff is

working to keep our students engaged with their lessons and their classmates. It was also great to see how our staff members are using the system to keep engaged with each other.

- I was also able to be a guest during the **National Finals for the “We the People”** competition and was able to see Incline High School students compete. They did a marvelous job representing their school, our district, and our state. Thank you to all of the WTP participants and the advisors and teachers who worked so hard for the students this year. Watching a WTP competition always energizes me and I am so proud of our students!

- As a quick reminder: Please remember to fill out your Nevada Census 2020 forms at census.nv.gov by April 30. Every Nevadan can fill it out online, by phone, or by mail.

Finally—there is so much good news to report in our District this week. Please keep sending in those ideas to goodnews@washoeschools.net :

- **Max the Bulldog**, the mascot at Maxwell Elementary School, is staying busy while our students are learning at home. Tierney Cahill and her staff put together a great video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCgnnUx_BME&feature=youtu.be
- The Sparks High School community has individually **adopted the full class of 2020**. Each student in the senior class will be compiling an Amazon wish list of needed items. Once students develop their wish list, the person who adopted the senior will purchase item(s) and they will be mailed directly to the student’s address. All 296 seniors have been adopted, so they all will be getting some early graduation gifts from the Home of the Railroaders.
- Students and staff at **Galena High School** have banded together to design, plan, and create “halos”—an integral part of medical masks— using a 3D printer. Science teacher Adam Shoda worked with other members of the community to build these halos and send them to UNR for distribution to local medical personnel. Several Galena HS students have also created a website to coordinate distribution of homemade face coverings throughout the community.
- And speaking of face coverings, our own **Dr. Bryn Lapenta**, senior director of student accounting, has been working hard at her sewing machine to create more than 100 coverings for donation. In fact, a number of our talented staff members are working to create these coverings for other District staff members who are working in contact with the public as we distribute meals and learning materials to our families. If you have sewing abilities, we can use your help! The District can provide materials and patterns, and **Volunteer Services** is helping to coordinate the effort with supply distribution and collection of finished coverings. It’s a great way to celebrate National Volunteer Week, which was observed recently. Please email Lisa-Marie Lightfoot at llightfoot@washoeschools.net.

Thank you for all you are doing to support our students, families, and each other.

Take care,

Kristen

