



FOXFIRE SCHOOLS



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Zanesville, OH 43702-1818

Superintendent Todd Whiteman

Superintendent Update

March 31, 2020

As we navigate our way through these unprecedented circumstances for Ohio School Districts, yesterday's announcement from Governor DeWine has added yet another twist for Ohio School Districts and Ohio families. In a situation as serious as COVID-19, our first priority as a school district is the health and welfare of our students and their families.

Now that schools are shut down until at least May 1st, some serious and difficult decisions will need to be made for completing the school year. For many of our families and teachers, Project Based Learning, on-line education, and blended learning will continue to be the platforms we utilize during this trying time. Some of us have adjusted quite well and for others who are not as tech savvy or do not have broadband internet access at their homes, it has proven to be quite challenging.

At the end of the day, our goal is to be able to finish the school year providing the best education possible to our students. We are currently facing unique daunting challenges as we serve students from 20 different school districts and 8 different counties. Some families do not have internet, some do not have a computer or cell phone, and some families are struggling to support their children completing paper assignments and with online learning. Some have communicated that the lessons are too easy and your children are completing them quickly, while others have vented that the work is entirely too complex for them to do on their own. This is completely understandable as none of us were prepared for a national crisis of this magnitude.

Despite these new challenges that we are now facing, our staff is working extremely hard to address these major barriers. We are very confident we can provide quality educational experiences, resources, and supports for all of our students. Our teachers and principals have been training on the distance learning platforms during the short-term closure and will be ready to welcome students virtually on Monday, April 6.

We understand there will be many questions, growing pains, and unforeseen hiccups as our school district transitions into providing remote education. I ask for families to be patient in this process and to partner with us in educating our community's students.

I have witnessed some extraordinary efforts by many of our educators to provide amazing opportunities to their students. I am very proud of our staff and our students for how they have responded to this crisis. It is not the goal of the school district to punish students academically for a situation beyond their control. Similarly, it is not acceptable for students to take advantage of this current situation and not do their part towards making the next seven weeks meaningful. This truly is a time to recognize the value

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and the benefits of real learning and to embrace the opportunity to be self-motivated. It is a great time to read, to exercise, and to be of help to others.

We will be providing critical information early next week for you and your children includes:

- How to access your student's online distance learning platforms – Edgenuity/ Compass Learning - Google Classroom
- How to connect with your student's teacher, principal, and school support staff.
- How to access your student's email address. Our IT team will be activating email addresses, to be used for communication within the District only, for all students on April 6.
- Where to find Wi-Fi access across the city if you don't have reliable access at home.
- What to do if you do not have a computer or cell phone that has Wi-Fi
- How and When to turn in assignments?
- How and When New Assignment will be issued?
- Graduation Candidates
- How and When You Can Pick Up Your Child's Medication from the School Nurse

I also understand that education is just one factor that our families are dealing with during this pandemic. Please know that our team is here to help and to support you. It is my hope that all of our families, students, and staff stay safe and follow the recommendations and orders given by health experts. I encourage you to "Stay Safe. This is a serious epidemic that is unlike anything we have seen in our lifetime. The worst is coming so I urge all of you to follow the Governor's orders and Stay Home.

The Coronavirus epidemic has brought about so many questions for schools that quite simply we do not have answers for. The single most important thing is the safety of health of each of you and your families. Secondly it is critical to control the things that we can control. We do not have a perfect solution that fits each student. I can assure you that will work with you and your child the best we can to ensure they are successful. As we have compassion, patience and grace for your child I ask that you demonstrate the same in return for our teachers and staff. I pray for blessings, health, happiness and peace for each of you.

Sincerely,

Todd Whiteman

Superintendent Foxfire Schools

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