



April 6, 2020

WILLIAM V. HUSFELT III

SUPERINTENDENT

1311 Balboa Avenue

Panama City, Florida

32401-2080

(850) 767-4100

Hearing Impaired Access

(800) 955-8770 Voice

(800) 955-8771 TDD

www.bay.k12.fl.us

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

Many of you have told us you're struggling with distance learning. SO ARE WE and we're the "experts". No school district in the world was prepared to suddenly switch to virtual learning and no parent group has been secretly holding expert distance learning teaching skills as their secret weapon. We're adjusting, you're adjusting and our students are adjusting ... the good news is we are all in this together and we can support each other.

We know that some of you are still facing challenges logging in (call 767-HELP and press 1 if we can assist) and others are waiting for loaner devices or paper-packet pick up. It's okay ... we will get all of this figured out together and your students won't be "left behind". All students, across the world, are in the same boat. Our teachers are experts at being flexible and they will get everyone back on the same page next school year no matter what.

So, be kind to yourselves. Most of you don't have teaching degrees! Many of you are trying to juggle working from home and teaching your students! Lots of you have really BIG stressors in your lives right now. We. Get. That.

And we're here to support you as much as we possibly can.

A couple of weeks ago, Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran focused in on two words to carry us through this crisis – grace and compassion. It seems that we're doing a pretty good job of showing grace and compassion to others but maybe not to ourselves.

- If you read to your student today – you're doing a good job!
- If you worked a little math into cooking dinner with your student today – you're doing a good job!
- If you took a walk outside with your student today and talked about what you saw – you're doing a good job!
- If you encouraged your student to keep a diary or a journal about what's going on in the world – you're doing a good job!
- If you squeezed some "traditional" academics into an hour or two of your student's day – you're doing a good job!

As long as your student is learning and growing during this challenging time, there isn't a "right" or "wrong" way to do this distance learning process. Our teachers are going to be as flexible as possible during this challenging time. We ask that your student attempt the work assigned by his/her teacher and turn in his/her best efforts. If that happens consistently, everything will turn out okay in the end.

Nothing like this has ever been done before, and hopefully won't ever have to happen again, and we're all learning together. There's NO expectation that your student is sitting at a desk for traditional school hours doing nothing but traditional school work. We know that many of you are working and are trying to catch up with this in the evenings and that's okay too.

We're working with our teachers, all of whom are passionately committed to your students, to adjust our collective expectations, to simplify as much as possible and to understand that distance learning will never replace traditional school. Again, it's simply not reasonable to expect your student to sit at a desk for seven hours a day and we want you to know that's NOT our expectation. This isn't home schooling or virtual schooling, it's CRISIS SCHOOLING and it's going to look different than your visions of home school and our vision also. We understand that, our teachers understand that and we hope you do as well. Basically, we're asking you to give it your best effort (whatever that looks like), for your students to try as hard as they can and for our teachers to do the very best they can as well. If we all do that, we're going to be fine individually and collectively as a district.

We've overcome so many challenges together since Hurricane Michael and we know we will get through this one together with grace and compassion for each other, for ourselves, for our educators and for our students.

Thank you for allowing us to be your educational partners!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Husfelt", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William V. Husfelt
Superintendent