
Hillery Park Elementary School



Home of the Huskies

Monthly Messenger

October 15, 2020

Home to School Connection

We have just completed our first month of the school year. During this time we have learned many new ways of teaching and communicating with students. Something which is far from new, but never more true, is the important role families play in the learning process. Our partnership with parents is incredibly valuable to us here at Hillery Park Elementary. As a means of strengthening our home to school connection, we will be hosting weekly meetings with parents and our administrative team.

As the Principal of this great school, I am dedicated to meeting the needs of our students and families. In order to accomplish this goal we need to hear from you and discuss the issues you are contending with as students continue to learn in a remote environment. Beginning next week, these meetings will be held every **Tuesday** morning from **10:00-11:00** am and every **Wednesday** evening from **6:00-7:00 pm**. We will meet via **Zoom**. Here is the invite link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77420339887?pwd=NTR2K0E1cXkrajVxY01OMVAwYVBnUT09>

Meeting ID: 774 2033 9887 **Passcode:** g8sk6E

Caution and Courtesy

Having students learning from home has created a whole new set of challenges for teachers and parents alike. One issue that is causing some concern is hearing and seeing things in homes that should be private. There have been times when students have appeared on camera dressed less than appropriately, while on other occasions we are hearing the use of adult language from adults. I am neither judging nor chastising families, rather reminding families that during Synchronous learning (live) time, the area where children are learning is being broadcast to their teachers and all their classmates.

As far as attire, we are not enforcing our uniform policy. However, students should not be coming into the virtual classroom in pajamas, robes, underwear or appearing shirtless. Additionally, lying in bed or on the couch is not the best way to tune into class. Lastly, I expect every member of our staff to be courteous at all times. I ask that parents and students show the same to our teachers. They are working incredibly hard and deserve our respect. Thank you!

Remote Behavior Matrix

Most, if not of our all students, are very familiar with our Behavioral Matrix which articulates the behavioral expectations we have for students in the hallways, classrooms and cafeteria while here at Hillery Park Elementary. This has long been a staple in our Tier One, school-wide system. Now with empty hallways and classrooms we have presented with an entirely different set of challenging behaviors which can be even more difficult to curtail.

To meet this challenge the members of the Instructional Leadership Teams and Multi-Tiered Student Support Team came together to develop a behavior matrix for students during remote instruction. We believe we have created a tool for teachers, students and parents that articulates the specific behaviors students must demonstrate while learning from home. I am attaching this document. You will likely recognize that while comprehensive, there are several redundancies. This was by design. We need to repeat what we expect in several different ways to ensure those expectations take root.

Please take some time to read this document yourself and review it with your student. If you can print out a copy and place somewhere in your student's learning area. That too would be beneficial.

Homeroom

For the first month we have used the beginning of the school day for Office Hours. Moving forward we will have all students meeting for Homeroom to begin their day. Our school day will begin every day at 9am. Every student will begin their day with a Homeroom Period. In grades PK-6, Homeroom will run from 9am-9:30am. For grades 7-8, homeroom will run from 9:00am-9:20am.

All homeroom periods will be Synchronous (live.) Attendance will be taken during homeroom. Our Homeroom period here at Hillery Park Elementary is very purposeful. The following activity will occur during homeroom:

- ✓ Teachers will review or reiterate the Remote Behavioral Matrix.
- ✓ Announcements are played (This includes the Pledge of Allegiance, Hillery Park Pledge and Vision Statement)
- ✓ The students' daily schedule is reviewed. This provides the students the opportunity to get themselves organized and ready for their school day.
- ✓ Teachers will review the Character Trait of the Month and provide students with a question or prompt which will lead to a quick written reflection, conversation or some other activity.
- ✓ Teachers will also use this time to "check-in" with students and have the freedom to use Homeroom for social-emotional learning and/or circle time.
- ✓ While working remotely, Homeroom will also give students the opportunity to communicate any of the IT issues they are experiencing.

Students' Schedules

The changes to homeroom and other small tweaks have led to the students' schedules looking a little different. All schedules are updated and can be found on the Hillery Park webpage.

Link to Hillery Park Elementary webpage: <https://www.buffaloschools.org/PS027>

Meals and Masks

BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York and the Buffalo Sabres have teamed up to welcome Buffalo Public School families back to the school year by providing personal protective equipment (PPE) kits to them. Each kit includes face coverings and hand sanitizer to help keep Buffalo Public School families safe.

Hillery Park Elementary has been selected as one of the locations that will be distributing to families during the Grab and Go meal distribution on Monday, October 19 from 11am-1:00pm.

IT Help

We recognize that the biggest problem most students and parents are still facing is technology. By this point all students in grades 2-8 should have their devices and if needed a hotspot to provide a reliable internet connection in every home. If you are without a device or hotspot please go to **Student Device Distribution & Technical Support on 1515 South Park**. They are open Monday through Friday, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm with extended distribution hours on **Wednesdays 10:00 am - 6:30 pm**. If you are having issues with IT, call the help desk at **716-816-3510**.

Virtual Learning Support Centers

Virtual Learning Support Centers are in-person sites throughout the community designed to assist families in need of supervision, nutrition, internet connectivity, and support during this period of remote school instruction.

"Live Well Erie Cares Act Child Care Funding" is currently in place to support the Virtual Learning Support Centers through December 31, 2020. Say Yes Buffalo has been designated by the Buffalo Board of Education to administer this programming for Buffalo students.

Support Centers will be operated independently by community-based organizations including child care centers, churches, community centers, and youth-oriented agencies. Transportation will NOT be provided. The program is open for all students currently in grades K-8!

Go to this website for more information. <https://sayyesbuffalo.org/supportcenters/>

Dibbles

One of the first steps we take at the beginning of the school year with our students in grades K-5 is assess literacy levels using a tool known as DIBELS. Given the extended amount of time students have been away from school, these assessments are even more important this Fall. Unfortunately, just like every other undertaking during COVID, this process will be different and require parents to be aware of the actual process.

Students will be ‘pulled’ during Synchronous time. Reading teachers will call participants on TEAMS, students should answer and will resume regular class as soon as they are done. Once the reading teacher has completed the assessment, students will return to either the Synchronous meeting or complete the Asynchronous work their teacher has assigned.

Next week Ms. Konieczny and Ms. MacKinnon will be calling students who have yet to complete this assessment. As each test takes a different amount of time per child, there is no way for us to set even a loose schedule. We wanted to share this as our first week of calling students into the Teams meeting was hit and miss. Keep in mind that these “calls” are going directly to the student’s iPad. Teachers are informing students to be on the “look-out” and I wanted to share the same “heads-up” with parents.

Students of the Month

Each month, homeroom teachers PK-8 will select one (1) student who has exemplified the Character Trait of the Month through his or her actions, words, and deeds. ***Students of the Month*** should be shining examples of what we consider being Respectful, Responsible and Ready. Additionally, Special area teachers (Spanish, Technology and Home and Careers) will select one student per month as the ***Student of the Month*** in that discipline. Encore area teachers (Art, Music and PE/Health) will select two students: one from PK-4 and one from 5-8.

Students/Parents will receive a certificate, a custom Hillery Park Elementary tee shirt, Bumper Sticker and gift certificate (TBD) With parent permission, each Student of the Month will have their picture and narrative of accomplishments will be posted on our School Website.

Survey Regarding Remote Learning

The BPS is looking for your input regarding our remote learning environment and how you wish to proceed moving forward. Please take a moment along with your student(s) to complete this survey. Your input will have an impact on the District’s decision making.

Students:

<https://www.buffaloschools.org/cms/module/selectsurvey/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=364>

Parents:

<https://www.buffaloschools.org/cms/module/selectsurvey/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=365>