The following is a briefing for the week of March 23rd on behalf of Dr. Cash.

Dear Colleagues:

With so much of everyone’s attention focused on the pandemic that is sweeping the world, allow me to share with you some of the bright spots of what our “new normal” is in the Buffalo Public Schools. We have three big objectives in our service to students – maintain and extend academic learning, eat nutritious meals, and engage in health and wellness activities daily. I am so proud of the ways staff and families have stepped up to help us to fulfill those objectives in these extraordinary times.

Take home reading at Harvey Austin #97 and curbside meal pick-up at Herman Badillo #76

On BPS Workplace by Facebook, teacher Joel Fisher writes: “I teach Pre-K at PS #61, Arthur O. Eve School of Distinction. I’ve been in close contact with families and students through ClassDojo as well as FaceTime this week!” Ms. Fisher says, “I created mini video lessons on letter Rr, what it looks like, sounds like, and then went on a scavenger hunt in my home for things that began with Rr. Students then practiced writing Rr, made pictures of things that begin with Rr, and then went on their own scavenger hunts to find things that began with Rr! Our math lesson was to count all of the RED things in their homes!! They had so much fun with this, and the pictures sent from parents made my day.❤️️”
This is the way meetings and class lessons look now. Below, clockwise from top left, Frank A. Sedita #30 Principal Rafael Perez has a meeting with staff; Mrs. Kagan, 2nd grade dual language teacher at School #30, checks in with her students; the 4th grade dual language team teachers (Ms. Arellano, Mrs. Harris and Mrs. Dipirro) have created “office hours” for their students, and at BUILD Community School, a staff meeting! Educators are all essential workers, all of the time!

This week, we have served over 104,000 meals!!! As grocery stores become less safe and more depleted, along with the possibility of dwindling finances, we expect the call for essential nutrition for our children to rise. We have a dedicated group of front-line employees preparing meals at the central food preparation commissary for school and curb-side pick-up at our 28 Community Schools, along with a growing group of home delivery volunteers. Over 75 individuals from the following groups are currently serving as meal delivery volunteers: MVP, Back to Basics, Stop the Violence, Peacekeepers, UB Medical Students, SNUG, Buffalo Police Department, FATHERS, and Say Yes Buffalo. This week, these volunteers delivered over 3,000 meals to residents. Thank you, volunteers!

As noted in our 3-26-20 update to Governor Cuomo, we have just received donation of an additional 6,000 masks for our food service workers, along with 500 gloves, with more donations on the way. Daily sanitization of all of 28 sites and the central commissary continues by 450 of our outstanding corps of custodians and engineers.
From the Office of CLRI, please find attached for your reading pleasure, two exemplary literary works, taken from the 1920s Brownies Books edited by the great scholar W.E.B. DuBois. These books will be used at grades 5-7 entitled, *A Story of a Former Slave Boy* and *The Wishing Game*.

This week, we developed a BPS Helpline at 716-816-7100 to assist our District community to provide answers within 24 hours to our most frequently asked questions in the areas of Technology, Mental/Physical Wellness, Instruction and Professional Development, Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Initiatives (CLRI), Multilingual, Elementary and High School needs, Food Services, Child Care, and Volunteerism. We also prepared application for Smart Schools emergency funding of $9,126,830 to support Continuity of Instruction.

Meanwhile, our amazing teachers have created nearly 30,000 assignments, over 5,000 assessments, and engaged in over 12,000 online discussions with their students; Students, in turn, have submitted 27,000 assignments, taken nearly 11,000 tests and quizzes, and engaged in over 209,000 discussions with their teachers.

Teachers have also engaged in over 3,000 video conference calls for a total of almost 67,000 total minutes – that is 1,117 hours and counting!! Guidance Counselors have set up work groups with seniors to help them stay focused on completing their assignments toward graduation. Teachers, teacher assistants, and administrators have completed 592 online Professional Development courses as of 1:00pm today. New courses will be added to our virtual selection regularly. Thank you, teachers!

Finally, to our colleagues in City and County government, for their support of our Child Care Access Plan. To the Buffalo members of the WNY Legislative Delegation, for their daily engagement of their staff with our District. To John Mika, founder of The Teacher’s Desk, for donating over 7,000 books; and to Mayor Brown and his staff for their ongoing collaboration and support. Thank you to you all, you are the best!

Please stay safe & be well!

Dr. Kriner Cash
Superintendent