The following is the briefing for the week of April 20 – April 24 from Dr. Cash.

Dear BPS Community:

This week, I especially want to offer my highest praise to our Front Line workers. While the Cabinet and Division heads work tirelessly to build new-age infrastructure necessitated by the pandemic, there are more essential employees who must be physically present to keep the district moving forward. Food Service, Instructional Technology, Security, and Building Engineers and Administrative staff are “out there” every day dispensing meals, computer devices, safety and sanitization. They are the few, who touch many lives in carrying out their daily duties. They are in my prayers daily, and every night at 7:00 p.m. when I also applaud health care workers across the nation from my downtown Buffalo window. To our Front Line colleagues, I know I speak for the entire district when I say, “Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

This week Dominoes began delivery of 700 donated pizzas to our families (WGRZ photo above). It is noteworthy to add that BPS Food Service has served 607,929 meals since schools closed.

Thank you to the Instructional Technology Department for a stellar effort in distributing the laptops for grades 3 through 8 this week. Olmsted #156 Principal Dr. Michael Gruber said, “Everything was organized and went smoothly. [IT team members] Jillian Hess and Keith Hughes did an outstanding job. Security was on top of things. A good portion of the laptops were given out.” A large number of parents have communicated that they will use their home computers rather than district-issued devices.
Congratulations to MBK Fellows Byron Chavis, grade 11, East Community High School; and Jariel Correa, grade 11, McKinley High School, on their selection as featured speakers at the New York State MBK Fellows Virtual Village Meeting yesterday. The scholars discussed the impact of the Covid-19 virus on their lives, family, education, and communities. Their essay submissions where chosen out of hundreds that were submitted for this current MBK gathering of about 175 scholars and educators statewide. Presiding over the meeting was NYSED Assistant Commissioner, Dr. Anael Alston, and NY State Board of Regent, Dr. Lester Young. Many other State Education Department officials, including our own Regent Dr. Catherine Collins, joined the meeting. #WeAreMBK

Western New York United Against Drug and Alcohol Abuse is a contracted partner working on a grant under the Department of Social Emotional Wellness. Our Elementary Student Leadership Program partners with Leaders in Training Prevention Specialists to work in 11 BPS elementary school buildings, providing social/emotional learning curriculum to classrooms and student leaders. These students have been meeting virtually to promote positive messages during these challenging times. These messages are sent via social media. Below are pictures of the “High Five” campaign.

Buffalo School of Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management Principal, Katie Schuta, is seen distributing lawn “Pride Signs” to the homes of her high school seniors. She says, “The seniors were so excited to get their signs. We will continue to deliver them. It’s a special way to connect with our students and families while practicing social distancing. Mostly, we just wanted the Class of 2020 to know how proud we are of them.”
At B.E.S.T. School #6 everyone has made it their mission to stay together, while we are apart! Principal Karen Piotrowski says, “Teachers, counselors, teacher assistants & aides, clerical, cafeteria, nursing, engineering, BEST Self teams, & administrators miss each one of our students. So, we made a ‘We Miss You’ video for Pk-8 students! We hope our B.E.S.T. students see many familiar faces, read everyone’s special “We Miss You” message, & keep smiling while they learn from home.” These videos are a popular trend among our schools.

12:1:1 teacher Jesse Schminbauer from Grabiarz #79 writes, “Happy Fun Friday Everyone! I just want to share my set up for virtual teaching (ELA lesson). We all know it’s not the same as in the classroom (oh boy, can remote teaching be frustrating and limited) but we’re doing the best we can. I certainly never thought as a teacher I’d be gazing at a screen this much let alone trying to create a video studio in my basement. Well, enjoy! Stay Safe!”
Say Yes Buffalo has expanded our Community School Saturday Academies to programming on Facebook Live 6 days per week. Tune in beginning this Monday for a full roster of educational items of interest for the week ahead!

Today, we had our regular executive staff meeting to provide updates on the three major District priorities. The Executive Team makes it all happen! I am proud of each and every one of them for their dedication, teamwork, and performance excellence that they are providing to the District.

Be well & be safe,

Dr. Kriner Cash
Superintendent