

Dear District 161 Families,

It goes without saying that all of us are in a time that makes us uncertain about many topics. This is also true for children. You know your children best and how they are responding to what they are hearing from adults in their lives and what they see online or on the TV. With this, I wanted to share some tips for speaking with children about COVID-19. Ultimately, each person will respond to these uncertain times in their own way. The best thing to remember is, however they respond, we are establishing a new "normal" right now. We can best support each other by listening, being patient, and comforting each other as we manage our uncertainty and fears.

Children may be confused about what they are hearing. It is important that we put them at ease, but we also need to be honest with them. If you'd like some ideas, please visit one of these sites or any site of your choice:

- [National Association of School Psychologists](#)
- [Kids Health](#)

While the next several weeks will test all of us, it is our hope that our actions will make a positive difference in keeping our families and our communities safe and healthy.

We will share information as needed so that you are aware of any changes in plans for our district. If all goes as planned, we will welcome our students back to school on Monday, April 6!

Sincerely,
Supt. Barb Rains, Ed.D.

Answers to key parent questions

- **What is included in Monday's optional retrieval of a student's personal items?**

Parents only need to come to school to pick up such personal items as glasses, etc. that a student may need or a gym suit (if applicable) that may need to be washed. The Continuity of Learning Plan does not require use of current textbooks.

- **Continuity of Learning Plans**

The directions and link to the plans will be **e-blasted at 3 p.m. today**. The plans include electronic and non-electronic practice learning opportunities. The Continuity of Learning Plan does not require use of current textbooks.

- **Why aren't student tablets allowed to be pick up?**

Currently all student tablets are housed in charging carts while not in use during the school day. No extra chargers currently are available. We would need to dismantle the carts to retrieve the charging cords. Based on the Board's approval on Friday of emergency school closure funding, the tech department will begin dismantling the charging carts and charging cords on Monday and will communicate the plan this week to allow parents to pick up and sign off on their student(s) device/charging cord. Please know that each student has an assigned tablet and the student tablet, if utilized at home, will continue to activate District-approved software which includes the District's filtering software.

- **Make up days?**

From ISBE: Due to current health landscape, school districts **will not** be required to use or make up emergency days related to COVID-19. Any days missed due to COVID-19 shall be considered Act of God days and are not required to be made up.