



July 16, 2020

Dear parent/guardian,

As we all navigate through these unprecedented and fluid times, MEISD is diligently preparing for the start of the school year. As of this writing, we are planning to open our doors for all of our students on August 17th. For 2020-2021, there will be a 'new normal' that we will have to abide by with new rules, regulations and mandates from the governor, state health experts and the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

In this unprecedented year, MEISD is going to offer traditional, in-person learning (regular on campus school) and an option to learn virtually (off-campus). Although the option of off-campus learning will be available, MEISD encourages all students to participate in the traditional, on-campus learning. Studies have shown that students learn at a higher rate when sitting in a class with a physical teacher present....not to mention the social and psychological effects of kids being at school with one another. MEISD also acknowledges that there may be a few students that have underlying health conditions or are worried about an elderly family member that lives under the same roof. That's why we are going to offer the virtual, or off campus option for those students.

Survey Information

In order for MEISD to have needed information for the start of 20-21, the district will provide a survey on our website on or before July 22nd. This survey will ask parents to choose which method of instruction you plan for your child....either a traditional, in-person (on campus) or a virtual (off campus) method of instruction. This survey will help us with information on the materials we will need to prepare and properly educate students off-campus. It will also give us needed information on the amount of in-person students that will be arriving on our campuses.

Start of School procedures

Although I will send out a more detailed version of our health, safety and instructional procedures for the start of school in early August, below are some bullets of information that Mt. Enterprise will be following when school begins.

- Students must stay home if they have related symptoms or a confirmed case of the new coronavirus.
- Those with confirmed cases or displaying symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home throughout the infection period. They cannot return until screened by school officials to determine that they have been fever-free for at least three days, have improved symptoms and that it's been at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms. A virtual learning option can be available during the quarantine.
- Students showing symptoms while at school will be immediately separated from others until they can be picked up by a parent or guardian.

- If a campus has a confirmed case, the school will close off areas that were heavily used by the individual until it can be disinfected, unless more than three days have passed since that person was on campus.
- All teachers, staff and families of students must be notified if a lab-confirmed case is associated with someone on campus. Privacy of student(s) will be adhered to.
- Campuses will work to reduce or eliminate large gatherings of an entire campus...this will include school-wide pep rallies and campus level assemblies. If we have pep rallies, attendance will be limited.
- Frequent hand-washing will be encouraged throughout the day.
- Windows will be open, when possible, to allow for improved air flow.
- Students and staff are mandated to follow the governor's orders on mask-wearing. A county has to have 20 or less active COVID cases for the mask mandate to be lifted. As of this writing, Rusk County has more than 20.
- Students under 10 will not be required to wear a mask. Parents can opt-in if you want your student to wear one that is under 10.
- Students who are exercising or engaged in other activities where a mask is not practical can remove them as long as they work to maintain a six-foot distance from others, if at all possible.

Transportation:

The district is encouraging parent drop-off, walking or riding a bike to school to alleviate bus crowding. However, bus ridership will remain available to students that are in the transportation area.

Drivers and riders will be required to wear face coverings if the governor's mandate is still in effect. All buses will have hand sanitizer dispensers for use when loading and unloading. Students will be assigned seats. Buses will be sanitized each day.

Remote (off campus) learning

Below are a few points of information for parents that choose virtual/off-campus learning.

- Remote learning at home will require significantly more from the school and student compared to at-home learning this past spring.
- The district grading policy will be followed and numerical grades taken.
- Grades will factor into class rank and grade point average for students in courses for high school credit.
- Time spent on work and assignments will require at least 4 hours daily.
- Assignments may be due daily for each subject, and participation may be required at specific times for live instruction.
- Participation in UIL events may be linked to a traditional, in-person learning model. UIL participation for virtual learners will be decided no later than the August 10th board meeting.

- Daily attendance will be required and for attendance purposes, the student and teacher will have daily contact.
- The 90% attendance rule will be in place for virtual, off-campus learners to receive credit for the class/course.
- Internet connectivity will be a plus for the optimum virtual learning experience.
- Certain CTE courses will only be available for in-person instruction. For example, welding classes.
- Students will be required to commit to an entire 6 week grading period before making a decision to attend in-person. Some exceptions may apply.

Cafeteria

Cafeteria policies and procedures plans haven't been finalized. With mandates, we will have to reduce the amount of students we allow in the cafeteria at one time. For example, some students may have to eat in their classrooms. Classes in the secondary may have to stagger their arrivals. Final plans will be made in the next few weeks.

Conclusion

Parents, as I mentioned earlier, more detailed information will be made available in early August. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to email me at: bjordan@meisd.org. I will try to answer your questions or alleviate any concern you may have as the start of school nears. Have a great rest of the summer! Be safe out there!

God Bless and GO WILDCATS!!

Byron Jordan
Superintendent