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Dear Students, Parents, and Staff,

As our new reality sinks in, I know a question on our minds and hearts is, “How do we do this thing called ‘at-home’ learning?”

I write to you as a parent first and an SBISD leader second. As we try new things to keep our children engaged and learning, we know every family and every employee has a unique set of circumstances. Each day, we turn on the news, and there is a new twist.

As a parent, I will do my best to establish a routine for my son that ensures he continues working and learning as well as possible. I’ll also be aware that he will need breaks, too. While he has enjoyed spring break, I can tell that, at least in part, he is ready to have some structure around learning time. Routines and structure help bring a bit of normalcy to our lives, and we took time this weekend to talk through how the next weeks will work for him and for our family.

Developing common ground. As we transition to a new normal, at least for the next few weeks, our district leaders have spent time re-thinking systems and structures to conduct school virtually. We’ve also focused on the role each of us has to play to make this all work, with a focus on flexibility, patience, and optimism.

We also affirmed that the next two weeks should be the time for our leaders to provide professional development for their teacher teams and for significant teacher planning to occur. An added layer is making sure this learning and planning happens in alignment with social distancing and limited group size guidance from governmental and health agencies. So, we’re also learning how to video conference and work remotely. New learning for us all!

Digital Backpack Resources and itsLearning. Later this afternoon, you’ll receive a message officially launching our [Digital Backpack](#). The lessons and resources within the Digital Backpack are aligned with the curriculum by grade level that our students would be learning during the 4th nine weeks. We hope you’ll find the learning resources to be robust and engaging.

For teachers who already actively engage in and champion the use of itsLearning (ITSL), SBISD’s learning management system, the **Digital Backpack** serves as another layer of instructional support.

Our secondary students take a wide array of courses; please understand that our first layer of eLearning focuses on core content areas. While many secondary teachers actively use ITSL already, our Middle School and High School principals will work closely with teacher teams in moving their courses fully online.

Key features of the Digital Backpack:

- Weekly **eLearning guides** aligned to 4th nine weeks TEKS for core content areas.
- The overview of each guide outlines the learning for the week with content pages stacked behind.
- Middle school students taking advanced math courses will find a link to high school content.
- Dual credit and OnRamps information is posted under the Resources header.
- Supports for dyslexia and special education are posted there as well.

Week of March 23 Priorities. Here are our priorities for first week of At-Home Learning:

Students:

- Check email daily for information from your teachers.
- Review the attachment “What is my role when learning from home?”
- Launch the Digital Backpack and explore the many resources.
- Find your eLearning guides within the Digital Backpack and work through your course tasks.

Parents:

- Be aware that one of your child’s teachers will reach out to you early this week.
- Review the eLearning guides to understand how your child can engage in the course work.
- Please take your time and engage in ways that are balanced for your children and your schedules.

Teachers:

- Calling parents and connecting with students.
- Collaborating with their teacher teams.

Principals:

- Re-establishing school systems and structures.
- Connecting with staff.
- Supporting teacher training.

Across the country and across our own community, this extraordinary time is calling on us all to leverage key SBISD core values. We believe in **Limitless Curiosity** – that we never stop learning and growing. We are all certainly stretching our imaginations as we ramp up very quickly to teach and learn in an entirely new way. We also believe in our **Collective Greatness** – that we, as a community, leverage our individual strengths to reach challenging goals.

Together, I know we’ll achieve great things, if even in a brand new way. Please know we are right here next to you. If you have questions, Digital Backpack has a place to ask them directly by grade level. You can always reach out to me, too. Wishing us all the best of health and success in this very challenging time.

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