

Digital/Home Based Learning Days Coming To River Bend! Pilot to be conducted Monday April 22, 2019

River Bend Students, Parents, and Guardians,

I am excited to announce that River Bend School District is planning an innovative approach to dealing with inclement weather and emergency days. Public Act 100-0465 was signed into law on August 31st, 2017, and is linked [HERE](#). This act made sweeping changes to education funding in Illinois, but also created flexibility in the definition of an "instructional day." A memo outlining more background can be found [HERE](#).

Starting and ending the school year on time has taken on a new level of importance to us as we work to complete projects and educational goals. This reality, coupled with the new flexibility afforded us by the State of Illinois, has led us to explore and develop a plan to incorporate "Digital/Home Based Learning Days" at River Bend.

In the past, if a snow day were called, that "instructional day" was tacked on to the end of the school year or during a holiday. This extended the school year or caused problems with scheduling because families and staff planned events on the holidays. After extensive meetings with staff, we felt that a "Digital/Home-Based day" integrated during the year could be more effective than an additional day at the end of the year for many of our students. River Bend will be piloting the use of the "Digital/Home-Based day" on Monday, April 22nd. Students will **not** attend school on this day and be assigned work digitally or be given work to complete at home. Families will be given the flexibility to complete the work starting Thursday, April 18 and manage the days off in a way that works best for them. Principals and teachers will be providing more details as they continue to plan for the "Digital/Home-Based" learning pilot on Monday, April 22nd.

What is a Digital Learning Day?

A "Digital/Home-Based Learning Day" approach allows us to provide an "instructional day" even if our buildings are not open due to weather or in the case of a make-up day. Teachers will provide content to students using digital platforms or materials that can be completed at home. Students will be given a block of time to complete the work. For our pilot on Monday April 22, 2019, students will be given the work on Thursday, April 18, 2019 and will need to submit any electronic assignments by 9:00 PM on Monday, April 22nd. Fulton High School will determine their due dates based on their block schedule. Teachers will be available electronically to provide assistance on Monday, April 22, 2019, from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

Won't this look different at each grade level?

Each grade level of teachers will be collaborating on any digital-learning day to collectively develop experiences that are grade level appropriate and ideally a continuation of what has been happening in the classroom. Examples could include a review of content in social studies, a reinforcement activity in math, a video introduction of a unit, or a spelling or writing prompt. At higher-grade levels, many of our students are already engaged in digital platforms for classes utilizing google classroom or Canvas. In these cases, teachers will simply assign experiences as though the student were in attendance.

Will students that cannot complete the work be penalized?

Absolutely not! We understand that internet access may not be available to everyone, and that some students may not be able to complete all tasks assigned by instructors. We also want to be clear that not all activities will need the internet to be completed. These days are meant to enhance learning and be formative in nature. Our teachers will allow students to "catch up" if needed upon our return to school.

Will this be our policy moving forward?

The short answer is that we hope that it is; However, we realize that this is a new and innovative idea that we will be analyzing and assessing along the way. We reserve the right to pull the plug if necessary. That being said, our staff is excited to innovate and lead the way toward what we believe will be a trend in public education moving forward.

digital learning day



empowering teachers & learners,
promoting innovation