Charging through failures, stampeding through challenges  

September 2020

Message from the Principal

Hello Bison families! Our staff is SO excited to get this year under way. Many HPS staff members volunteered their time throughout June-August (and all staff collaborated August 12-28th) to rethink, rework, and design instruction for a 100% remote learning experience. As decisions changed throughout the summer, our staff shifted and worked through the multiple scenarios presented. We feel confident we are ready to support each of our HPS Bison, whether the model of instruction is 100% remote, hybrid, or 100% in person. And when something does not work as well as planned, we can and will adjust, so in advance thank you for your grace.

This school year is like no other, and our staff are implementing some very specific and intentional things to ensure we are connecting with both students and families regularly through two way communication channels. Some key things to note:

- Each teacher (7-8th share as a team) will communicate learning plans on the Friday before instruction begins for that week. This will allow families to prepare for the week ahead.

- Included in this weekly learning plan communication is a link for our High Plains K-8 School Family Connection. Teachers will have shared this link and information about it with families at their Back to School Night sessions. We know that a partnership with families will increase student engagement, success, and overall emotional well-being. This form also streamlines for our parents one place to go rather than multiple avenues to connect with staff.

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• Anytime you need to check in, meet with or have a question for a classroom teacher, core extension/elective teacher, or specialist, please complete this form. Most classroom teachers also use Class Dojo. This is a great two way communication tool for quick questions and messages.

• Attendance will be taken daily for K-5 during their first synchronous (live) session and inputted in Infinite Campus (IC). Afterward, K-5 teachers, including specials teachers, will track synchronous attendance. Teachers may adjust attendance in IC at the end of each week, if students demonstrate sufficient levels of success through submitted work and participation.

• Attendance will be taken during each of 4 periods during middle school (6-8th) synchronous (live) sessions and inputted in Infinite Campus (IC). MS Teachers may adjust attendance in IC at the end of each week, if students demonstrate sufficient levels of success through submitted work and participation.

• If students will not be in attendance for a full day or more, parents need to call the attendance line: (970) 679-9870. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the teacher, if a specific synchronous session will be missed. Teachers will note this in IC and their attendance tracking.

• If a student is absent for part or all of a day, students or their parents may request a recording of the synchronous session(s) the student missed. Teachers may also, at their discretion, share recordings with students.

• Asynchronous (not live) time will be directed by the teacher through “Must do and May do” activities that will be shared in the weekly learning plan the prior Friday. These activities will align with instruction in synchronous time and should be work a student can accomplish on their own to further their knowledge and skill sets. If a child has difficulty, teachers will share out how students can get support.

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• Students with identified plans in Special Education, Gifted and Talented, and English Language areas will receive support according to their plans during synchronous times, as well as through collaboration between these specialist teachers and student’s general education teachers.

• All K-8 teaching staff are using Google Classroom as the platform to house student instruction, work, communications, and apps/subscriptions students may use to support their learning. Teachers have and will continue to share tutorials for students and parents, and our technology committee will have a page with tutorials available on our website.

• All K-8 students will participate in synchronous Social Emotional Learning (SEL) sessions each day using our Second Step program and other resources HPS staff have been implementing the past 4 years. SEL sessions will not be recorded.

• Students will continue to collect and reflect on work they complete, with teacher feedback in support of creating learning portfolios that support a student in understanding where they are as a learner, the progress they have made, and next steps in their learning journey. Students will use this portfolio to support their student led conferences in October.

• HPS will continue to communicate with both our TCO and HPS In Person Remote families about school wide events, athletics, and activities.

As we get into the school year, parents can support their child by:

• Setting consistent routines for your child(ren)’s day from their morning routine to their remote learning time to bed time.

• Encouraging and supporting regular attendance and participation in both synchronous and asynchronous sessions and activities.

• Checking the school’s website, Facebook, Parent Portal, and school emails for upcoming events and important information.

• Connecting with your child’s teacher, when you have questions.

Please continue reading the newsletter for additional information.

Welcome back!

Danielle Feeney, principal
Free and Reduced Application

Free and Reduced Price meals are available to families who believe they may qualify. If your family chooses to apply please complete the “Free and Reduced Meal Price Application Form.” The forms are available at this link: TSD Nutrition Services and can be returned (completed) to any school office. You will be notified by mail of your child’s status. F/R status may also open up other resources, so families are encouraged to apply.

Reminder for Late Start Wednesday

All TSD schools are including late start Wednesdays again this school year in their schedules. On late start Wednesdays remote instruction will begin by 9:20 am. This time allows for educators to collaborate in their planning and professional growth opportunities. The first Wednesday late start will be September 9th.
Meet our new staff

We are growing! HPS staff has several new faces and a few staff members that are taking on new roles. Please join me in welcoming our new staff to the herd! Check their bios out on our HPS website under staff

• Joining our Kindergarten team- Ms. Marci Schroeder (teaching TCO kinders). Welcome back Mrs. Mindi Mayberry!
• 4th Grade team- Ms. Rhonda Vahlenkamp and Ms. Shauna Mayberry
• 5th Grade team- Ms. Shelby Brock; Ms. Salmon will be teaching TCO 5th graders
  Teaching TCO at the 6th grade level- Ms. Mary Armiger
• 7th/8th SciComm- Mr. Peter Carlson
• 7th/8th Humanities- Mr. Aaron Estevez
• 7th/8th MS Math- Mrs. Carolyn Phelps
• Innovation Specialist- Ms. Michelle Strickland
• Joining our Gifted & Talented team- Ms. Miranda Kantor
• Assistant Principal- Ms. Karen Helfrich
• Instructional/STEAM Coach- Mrs. Lindy Jones (former Innovation)
• School Psychologist- Christa Natke
• Learning Center Aide- Mateja Noah
• ESS para- Danica Noah
• Campus Monitor- Ryan Clevenger
SAAC

The School Accountability Advisory Committee supports High Plains School staff with some of the following items:

1. Reviewing and providing input into the development and implementation of the School’s Unified Improvement Plan
2. Providing input into budget allocation as it relates to the School’s Unified Improvement Plan
3. Providing input into activities to increase parent engagement in school

We are seeking a School Accountability Advisory Committee chairperson. This person meets with the principal prior to SAAC sessions (4 a year) to set the agenda, helps recruit members of our school’s community for SAAC, supports the communications and dialogues of the SAAC to community members, and participates in District Accountability Committee sessions to gain a district wide perspective that supports High Plains School’s efforts. If you are interested in chairing the School Accountability Advisory Committee, please email me at danielle.feeney@thompsonschools.org

HPS would like to hold our 1st SAAC meeting (virtual) on September 29th at 5:15pm. At this time, we will recalibrate where our district and school is, in regard to Remote/In person Learning, review beginning of year math and reading assessment data, as well as other sources of information that will help guide our dialogue and generate ideas to support our students’ success. The remaining dates: December 1st, February 16th, April 27th. All meetings will be Google meet, unless otherwise communicated.

YMCA

Our district chose specific school sites to house YMCA and Boys and Girls Club childcare. HPS’s site is at Ponderosa Elementary. Please check out the YMCA link (also on our website) for details. Scholarships and waivers are available through the YMCA. Please contact them.

PTCO

High Plains Parent Teacher Community Organization (PTCO) exists to enhance and support the educational experience, to develop a close connection between school, home and community by encouraging parental involvement, and to improve the environment at High Plains School through volunteer and financial support. They need YOUR support, so they can support our students and school. Please follow them on FB at High Plains School PTCO and their website is linked on the HPS website under Family and Community.
Warm greetings from the HPS library. Welcome to a new school year!

**Ebooks**

As we get into the new school year, we’ll make sure your students know how to access the huge number of ebooks available through Sora. If you want to get started now, or if you need a reminder, here’s how to access this enriching resource:

1. Go to [Sora](#).
2. Click on "Find my school."
3. Select any Thompson School District school (all are the same account).
5. Sign in with your child’s district log-in. Please contact me ([megan.mcgee@thompsonschools.org](mailto:megan.mcgee@thompsonschools.org)) if you have any questions about this.
6. Notice the different options (you can search by popular subjects, genres, or other categories) and enjoy browsing and then checking out books.

**Library Books**

Thank you to all who’ve been in touch about returning HPS library books from the spring. On any school day between 8:00 and 3:45, you’re welcome to bring books back to the school. Just ring the buzzer when you arrive, and you’ll get friendly assistance. During the month of September, notices will be sent out to families whose students still have books, and we’ll work together to get them returned. Thank you!

**Online Privacy**

As we are spending a lot of time while online learning and engaging with others, it’s a good idea to consider steps we can take to protect our online privacy. The very same sites and apps that we access for information, entertainment, and connecting are also collecting information about us. Take a moment to go through these helpful [resources and ideas](#) provided by Common Sense Media.

If you should experience any difficulties accessing resources or have any questions, please contact Mrs. McGee ([megan.mcgee@thompsonschools.org](mailto:megan.mcgee@thompsonschools.org)).

Take care and be safe; keep wondering and learning; be happy and well!
Hello from the Art Room!

Welcome back Bison! I can’t wait to get started with you in art class! Though we are starting remotely this year, I have some fun and exciting projects that are in the works that you will be able to do at home. When we come back to the classroom, we’ll get to do even more fun (and messy) projects. At that time, we will also get to finish and bring home artworks from last year.

Some things to remember:

Every elementary student and every middle school student enrolled in art first quarter, will need to join my Google Classroom for their age group. The codes will be posted on your homeroom Google Classroom or middle school Google Site.

Every art class meeting will be accessed from the Art Google Classroom you join. If you are in middle school, we will meet daily. If you are K-5, we will meet every five weeks for the entire week.

There are a few art materials the school will be providing, however, our order is taking longer than expected, so I will get back to you on when we have those available for pick up. I will include a list of the items that will be in the art kit, so if you have any of them, you may use them right away. I have a limited amount of materials in stock now, so if you don’t have anything and need your kit right away, please email me and I will be happy to get that to you sooner. Most items in the kit will not be needed before the other items arrive.

Art Kit Items:
⇒ Pencils and eraser
⇒ Drawing paper
⇒ Painting cardstock
⇒ Copy paper (sketch paper)
⇒ Color paper scraps
⇒ Glue stick
⇒ Watercolor paint set
⇒ Crayons

If there are other items you have that you would like to use for art class at home, such as: pastels, other types of paint, different types of paper, yarn, magazine/newspaper pages, etc., feel free to do so.

I can’t wait to see you and get started! Please feel free to email or message me with any questions.

Alicia Thompson
HPS Art Teacher
alicia.thompson@thompsonschools.org
100 Mile Club

Bison Families K-5,

Please use this link to join 100 Mile Club at home. This will allow you to sign up directly and run while we are in our remote learning time. My hope is that we can once again run together as soon as it’s possible. This is a GREAT way to continue our passion and commitment as a school for running and moving.

https://100mileclub.wufoo.com/forms/z1lx9gpj16uymzl/?mc_cid=cf6ec89224&mc_eid=3c4b5c209d

I’m very sorry that we weren’t able to have an End-of-the-Year celebration, but wanted to acknowledge the time and effort our students put in from August until March 13, 2020. We set a new school record for the months we were able to run. Imagine what we could have done with another 8 weeks! Our students ran 5,396.5 miles!!!

Medals, we had 39 students earn their 100 Mile Medals, and certificates for students who ran at least 5 miles will be placed in student material bags that will be distributed next week. Congrats to all students for making last year incredible and successful.

Smiles and LOTS of miles,

Mrs. Bellinghausen
Yearbook Wants Your Pictures!

Families and Students,

If ever there were a school year that needed to be archived, 2020-2021 is the year! High Plains will have a yearbook this year! Unique to this year is that our Yearbook staff will need to go beyond the Middle School Elective class. We need pictures from you! Please, in these first few weeks take time to capture the remote learning moments you and your families are sharing at home with your cameras and cell phones! Then email them to Mrs. Jones, lindy.jones@thompsonschools.org. I will then share them with the Yearbook Staff. Here are a few tips for taking photos using your smart phones!

✓ Turn on the camera’s gridlines. Place the subject of the photo on the intersections.
✓ Focus on faces in places.
✓ Don’t use digital zoom. Use your legs to get close.
✓ Set the camera’s focus and exposure by tapping on the screen.
✓ Don’t take pictures of people's backs, food in the mouth, anything embarrassing.
✓ Use natural light, no flash.
✓ Take candids (subject not posing for camera). Shoot emotions.
✓ Clean the phone lens with a microfiber cloth.
✓ Use portrait mode to control a busy, distracting background.
✓ Don’t add filters.
✓ Don’t edit. Leave that to the yearbook staff.
✓ Don’t shoot the subject in front of a window. Light from the window will silhouette subject.
✓ If shooting portraits outdoors, place subject in the shade.
✓ Hold the camera straight; don’t tilt.
✓ Take horizontal and vertical images.

More specifics on ordering Yearbook will be coming soon. In the meantime please send us photos! Any other questions regarding Yearbook can be sent to Mrs. Jones. Thank you for helping make this an even more memorable 2020-2021 school year!

Mrs. Jones and the Bison Yearbook Staff
Chess Club Online

For the safety of all our players, Chessmates we will be going to all online classes this Fall.

All grades are welcome!

For more information and to sign up, please visit:

http://chessmatesfc.com/school-chess-clubs/
Welcome back! Here are a few things to get you up to speed with the 20-21 middle school athletics COVID restrictions.

Currently, cross-country is the only sport taking place. All other sports have been delayed until the second semester in an attempt to reduce the impact of the pandemic. Please take a look at the season dates for the rest of the sports calendar.

Girls Basketball - 1.4.21 - 2.5.21
Boys Basketball - 2.8.21 - 3.11.21
Girls Volleyball - 3.22.21 - 4.24.21
Co-ed Track and Field - 4.4.21 - 5.28.21

Cross-Country:
If you are interested in running cross-country, there are still spots available on both the boys and girls teams! Contact Coach B at reid.bauersfeld@thompsonschools.org for more information.

Meets are limited to 25 runners of each gender per race. Dual meets will be run in two waves and quad meets will have JV races at a different site. For all regular season meets, each runner is limited to one spectator. Due to the number of runners at the championship meet, at this time, spectators are not allowed. The NCAC league is investigating ways to stream the meet online for spectators.

9.3.20 - Con Ball Dual @ CBMS
    1st race 4:30pm
    2nd race 5:15pm

9.9.20 - 4:30pm - Erwin Varsity Quad @ Erwin
    4:30pm - Walt Clark JV Quad @ WCMS

9.17.20 - HPS Dual @ Mehaffey Park - We are hosting this race!!
    1st race 4:30pm
    2nd race 5:15pm

9.24.20 - 4:30pm - HPS Varsity Quad @ Mehaffey Park - We are hosting this race!!
    4:30pm - Con Ball JV Quad @ CBMS

10.1.20 - 4:30pm Conference championship @ Mehaffey Park

If you have any questions regarding athletics, please don’t hesitate to contact me

reid.bauersfeld@thompsonschools.org  970.679.9812 - office phone

GO BISON!!