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e-Learning, September 26, 2019

Background of e-Learning

The 2017 Legislature amended the Length of School Year; Hours of Instruction to include the option for a district to utilize e-Learning days due to inclement weather, for up to five days in one school year. e-Learning days will be counted as an instructional day. During the 2018-19 school year, we had six days where we closed for snow or cold weather. Mahtomedi Public Schools is recommending that the Mahtomedi School Board adopt up to five days of e-Learning for inclement weather, with the option of not utilizing all five days based on staff, student, and family feedback. Pending School Board approval, Mahtomedi Public Schools will notify parents and students of the use of e-Learning days during the 2019-20 school year and work with stakeholders on the facilitation of e-Learning days.

Why e-Learning?

We live in a world in which learning can happen anywhere at any time. When school is shut down for a weather emergency or other reason, learning does not need to cease. In addition, having students develop greater capacity and skills for continuing their learning away from school is terrific preparation for living in the digital world.

- e-Learning Days allow our students to work from home, avoiding potentially dangerous commutes, and allow them to work in a safe, warm environment when the weather is unforgiving.
- e-Learning Days are intended to counter the loss of curriculum momentum resulting from school cancellations due to Minnesota's winter weather.
- e-Learning Days cannot replace the face-to-face time students have with their teachers, but it can provide better continuity when school is interrupted.
- e-Learning Days can also negate the need for makeup school days during breaks or in June, helping families more effectively plan summer activities.

Announcing and Facilitating e-Learning Days (ELD)

- Families of students will receive notification of the impending ELD, along with our typical announcements regarding inclement weather days.
- Teachers will communicate learning activities for the students in the courses that would have met that day.
- Teachers will be online and accessible by phone during regular school hours to provide support for student learning.
- Accommodations will be made for students with special needs and for students that do not have access to the internet.

e-Learning Expectations Different by Grade Level

Students build academic stamina and persistence with practice as they mature, and expectations for students to complete activities in an independent context will increase as they grow older. A positive outcome of an e-Learning day is student practice with self-direction.

For an e-Learning day, teachers will communicate the anticipated time requirements for an assignment and in the elementary grades will include choice and flexibility for families.

Next Steps

- Pending approval, families and students will be notified that e-Learning days will be used during the 2019-20 school year.
- Each building/grade level/department will develop common expectations and communication protocols to facilitate the e-Learning day.
- Each building will determine how attendance will be taken.
- Families and students will be notified regarding the e-Learning common expectations, and communication and attendance protocols.