



JAMES BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL

April 17, 2020

Dear Bulldog Nation,

Seemingly most of our learners are adjusting to our plan for continuous learning. While we recognize that it will not replace in-person instruction, we are excited about engaging our students in a new way of learning, while ensuring they have the necessary supports to help maximize their efforts. The following information serves as a summary of how Bowie is implementing recent directives and policy decisions made by the Board and the district's Office of High Schools.

ACCESSING LEARNING - BLEND is the Austin ISD Learning Management System that serves as a gateway for students to access their coursework and where students will get feedback from their teachers. It is also where teachers will post messages for students and parents. Parents should establish their own AISD cloud account (click [here](#) for instructions) to access BLEND and to help manage and/or monitor their child's academic progress. Check out the [BLEND Parent Tour](#) for more information. BLEND, Zoom, and Google Meet are the primary AISD-approved digital platforms for instructional delivery and where students will be able to video conference, collaborate, and complete assignments. Austin ISD is also preparing to address high school students' technology needs that may be preventing them from accessing their coursework. **To request a student Chromebook, internet hotspot, or Chromebook replacement charger, or to report a broken Chromebook, please submit the [Student Technology Need form](#).**

GRADING GUIDELINES

- The 10-week spring semester is still open for students to complete work that was assigned or scheduled before March 13. Students will have until May 26, 2020, to complete missing or outstanding work that will help them improve this 10-week spring semester grade. These grades will be recorded in the TEAMS gradebook.
- The 10-week spring semester average will be used by the teacher to determine the transcribed grade of "Pass" (70 or higher) or "Incomplete" (lower than 70). It can also be used to recover fall semester credit if a student failed the first semester of a year-long course and if averaging the failing fall semester and the passing spring semester numeric grades together is 70 or greater. The spring 2020 grades will never factor into the student's cumulative GPA or rank GPA.
- Activities and assignments for continuous learning will be assigned to students from April 6 through May 27, and teachers will provide students with feedback on this work in BLEND. Students will receive "No Marks" during this period of continuous learning, due to the unique nature of these circumstances.
- Teachers will use maximum flexibility in assessing and evaluating student learning for the remainder of the school year. To that end, assignments submitted during the period of continuous learning can positively influence students' overall grade for the year, based on their understanding of the content for the whole year or "demonstration of proficiency." In other words, any work assigned since April 6 may only benefit the student by positively contributing to the final grade. Only final grades will be shown on transcripts; the "No Marking" period of continuous learning will not show on a student's final transcript.

- **TIPS** - To support your child during distance learning:
- Establish routines and expectations. Balance screen time and non-screen time activities.
- Students should take brain breaks and move regularly as they study.
- Discuss what your child is learning and ask questions.
- Establish times for quiet and reflection.
- Remain mindful of your child's stress.

As we transition to this distance learning model, we remain focused on the social and emotional needs of our students. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your student's school counselor for support, if needed.

OTHER NEWS

As you know, Austin ISD made the difficult decision to [cancel proms and graduations](#) scheduled for May. In light of that decision and the extension of other local orders, we are also **canceling Camp Bowie Express** -- the transition camp planned for rising freshmen on May 2 and May 9 -- and are postponing the distribution of the Class of 2024 t-shirts. Our hope is that we will be able to reschedule these important activities in late summer, but of course, that is contingent on the progress of campus construction and the status of the COVID-19-related community health guidelines.

Speaking of campus construction, I am pleased to report that our contractor JE Dunn remains on schedule for the renovation and modernization of Bowie's facilities. They have implemented stringent safety protocols which allow their workers to proceed in a manner that protects their health and that of our community. JE Dunn anticipates that because of the early closure of the campus, they may be able to accelerate the demolition of the band hall and the tennis courts in preparation to start work on the new athletics complex and auditorium. **If you want to learn more about the Athletics and Fine Arts Improvements Design Development, I encourage you to attend the Community Meeting via Zoom next Friday, 4/24/2020, beginning at 2 p.m.** The meeting will also be recorded and available on the bond page of the district's website. Click [HERE](#) join the Zoom meeting.

It goes without saying that these are extraordinary times we are living in. To be a student, a parent, or a teacher--and some of you play multiple roles--during a worldwide health emergency such as COVID-19, is not something any of us have ever experienced. We are at home, during a crisis, trying to work. It is stressful and difficult but crucial, as Bowie alum Claire Wilcox illustrates in her poignant message [Sacrifice](#).

Remember that Bowie remains committed to flexible learning environments that foster creative thinking, a culture of caring, and personal connections. While the Bowie campus may be closed, I am confident that the purpose and passion for learning in all of us will continue to thrive.

Until we can meet at the tree,

Mark Robinson
Principal, James Bowie High School
Follow me on [Twitter](#) @robinson_mark_a