



JAMES BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL

Friday, April 24, 2020

Dear Bulldog Nation,

In response to the need for learning to continue during the indefinite period of campus closure, we have successfully transitioned to online continuous learning. Given the unique circumstances and bringing school into the home in a new way, many Bowie parents are taking the opportunity to learn more about coursework for their children but are finding the comprehensive BLEND (aka Canvas) platform difficult to navigate. One of the features that you can control as a parent is the automatic notifications that you receive. This week we wanted to share some additional information about BLEND to help you configure your BLEND parent account.

Please consider the following BLEND tips:

1. **Declutter and organize your BLEND dashboard.** To learn how to rename/nickname the lengthy course titles on the tiles to something more simplistic (ex: John - History), color code the tiles (ex: blue tiles for John's courses and red tiles for Mary's courses), rearrange the tiles and sync the BLEND calendar with your personal calendar, refer to these [written instructions](#) and these [written instructions](#), or check out this short [video](#) created by Melissa Prepster (an awesome Gorzycki teacher #GoTigers!)
2. **Personalize your BLEND notifications.** To keep you in the loop, BLEND sends parents emails in accordance with the default settings. But, do you need to receive an email notification seemingly every time a teacher takes action in a BLEND course? Or do you just want to be notified if there's a new announcement, when there's a new assignment added, or something else? To learn how to change and personalize the default notifications in BLEND, refer to these [written instructions](#) or watch this short [video](#).
3. **Turn off the notifications for some courses.** While you are not able to have different BLEND notifications settings for different courses and can not create different settings for each of your children, you can turn off the notifications for specific courses. For example, if you are only concerned about John's math class and Mary's science class, you can turn off the notifications for every other course in order to reduce the number of emails you receive. To learn how to turn-off the notifications for specific courses, refer to these [written instructions](#).
4. **Use the BLEND parent portal to see what your student is learning in all his/her classes.** Unless your family is experiencing hardship making it impossible, please do not allow your child to opt-out of classes or school right now. In much the same way that a balanced diet including the right amount of all of the food groups keeps us physically healthy, please support your student's academic health in maintaining engagement in all enrolled courses, and not just the classes they prefer. You can also support your child's psychological well-being and academic progress by keeping them connected with their teachers and peers and engaged in continuous learning. To confirm that your child is participating in each course, click Assignments in the course navigation to see all of your child's assignments for the class grouped into the categories

overdue, upcoming, or past. The adherence to the class schedule can help students develop a consistent routine and stay on top of all of their assignments:

SCHEDULE FOR ONLINE TEACHING					
TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Times for Optional	Live Instruction (whole group, small group, or individual)				STUDENT *FLEX TIME
9:00-10:00	Virtual Office Hours				9:00-12:00 PLC Meetings
10:00-10:45	Period 1	Period 5	Period 1	Period 5	
11:00-11:45	Period 2	Period 6	Period 2	Period 6	1:00-4:30 Grading, parent communication, planning, etc.
11:45-12:30	LUNCH				
12:45-1:30	Period 3	Period 7	Period 3	Period 7	
1:45-2:30	Period 4	Period 8	Period 4	Period 8	
2:30-3:30	Virtual Office Hours				
<i>*FLEX TIME - Students may access teacher virtual office hours (M-Th) or engage in independent learning towards course objectives/goals, recreational and social activities, family time, or other student-selected activities.</i>					

Senior News

In the wake of prom’s recently announced cancellation, the Class of 2020 sponsors met with the class officers and prom planning committee to get the students’ perspective about how they would like to direct the prom funds they raised over the last four years. The sponsors let me know that, perhaps unsurprising, these student leaders rejected most of the adult-generated ideas, including an idea on social media to purchase a yard sign for every senior. Ideally, the officers would like to host a Senior Send-Off Luncheon in August, but knowing that social-distancing guidelines moving forward may not allow for such an event, they are prepared to use the funds to purchase a yet-to-be-determined class gift for the students or school. I commend the Class of 2020 for their equity-focused leadership, continued resilience and generosity, and for their energy and creativity over the last four years.

As we are all aware, the current shelter in place order and prohibition of larger gatherings is in effect until May 9, 2020. We are starting to work on a plan in coordination with district officials to allow seniors to pick-up their caps and gowns, return their Chromebooks, pick up and drop off all personal or school property, and take care of any other final business. While I do not yet have any details or dates to share yet, I did want you to know that we are indeed working together to develop a plan to take care of these tasks. Additionally, the district is sending all Seniors an email with a link to the Senior Exit Survey (click [HERE](#) to preview the survey). Please ask your student to look for the email from AISD or use the QR code below to access the survey. The feedback collected will inform the district’s plans to support students and families in the transition to life after Bowie during these uncertain times.



Mental Health Awareness Month

As we consider the psychological impact of the current global health crisis on our students, I want to draw your attention to the upcoming Mental Health Awareness Month. Throughout the month of May, many of Bowie's teachers and staff will be participating in the Erika's Lighthouse Positivity Pledge, engaging in a daily activity to promote mental health. I invite you and your family to join us and boost your own family's well-being, by completing the daily tasks outlined in the [Positivity Pledge calendar](#).

Technology Support

Starting this week and continuing Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., families may swap non-working Austin ISD Chromebooks for working Chromebooks at Anderson High School, Austin High School, Crockett High School, and The AISD Performing Arts Center. For more information about what to bring, click [HERE](#).

Until we can meet at the tree,

Mark Robinson
Principal, James Bowie High School
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