



January 18, 2017

Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

It certainly has been an interesting winter so far with school delays and cancellations. We currently have missed three days due to snow, cold temperatures, and icy roads. As many of you know, we have three built-in snowdays to this year's school calendar. We will now be having school on the following dates: February 20, March 13, and May 15.

In October, MCS Administrators presented to the School Board a proposal to pilot an eLearning Day if we miss more than three days this school year due to inclement weather. The Board approved the proposal for trying one eLearning day this school year if needed. I want to bring parents up to speed on the vision of an eLearning day for MCS since our next missed day will result in our first eLearning Day.

We believe that we need to expose our students to online learning as the world continues to evolve into a technology-centered world for learning. Here is the basic procedure of how an eLearning Day will work at MCS:

- A regular day of school is cancelled between now and May 26, 2017.
- MCS will announce at least two weeks AFTER the cancelled school day an eLearning Day for students for a particular Saturday in February, March, April, or May. (For example, if school is cancelled on any day in January, MCS will designate either Saturday, Feb. 17 or 24, as the makeup eLearning Day for the missed day in January).
- Teachers will be working with students to train them on how to access the teacher's instruction and activities for the eLearning Day. The teachers' lessons will be current with the subject matter that the students are learning.
- On the Wednesday of the week of the Saturday eLearning Day, the teachers will open up their instructional videos and learning activities for students to access. These lessons will be available for students to complete as time permits after school on Wednesday evening, Thursday evening, Friday evening, all day on Saturday, all day on Sunday, and until Monday night. Students will need to watch and complete all lessons and activities for their classes. Student work will be graded and recorded as part of their grades and attendance.
- School will be open as an OPTION for students to come and complete their lessons on Saturday morning with teachers available to assist them. Please understand that students do not need to attend school on Saturday. Parents will need to provide transportation if you choose this option.

That's all that there is to it! We know that things won't go perfectly for the first time that we have an eLearning Day, but we want to be able to try it at least once. We will be surveying parents and students for your opinions following the eLearning Day. Any more days missed after the eLearning Day may be added to the end of the school year.

If you would like more information about eLearning and how it works at MCS, please attend one of the following parent meetings:

- MES Parents of Grades K and 1: January 23, 2017 at 5:30 pm at MES.
- MES Parents of Grades 2 and 3: January 30, 2017 at 5:30 pm at MES.
- MIS and MSJHS Parents: January 24, 2017 at 7:00 pm in the PAC at MJSHS.

The parent meetings are optional but will give you a chance to ask any questions and to hear more information about eLearning days. Please see the following page for answers to frequently asked questions.

Sincerely,

# eLearning **FAQ**



## ***What is eLearning?***

eLearning is a way to continue learning despite inclement weather. eLearning offers students a blended learning<sup>1</sup> experience aligned with critical classroom content. An eLearning day counts as a full school day and thus eliminates the need to tack on an extra day at the end of the school year.

## ***What if I do not have Internet at home?***

We understand that not all families have Internet access in their homes. Lesson Suites<sup>2</sup> will be designed with that thought in mind. There will be opportunities for students to gain online access after school or on Saturday during the eLearning window. Additionally, there are several free access points within our community, including the public library, the community pool, and several local restaurants.

## ***I am a parent of a K - 3 grader and we do not have a device at home. What do I do?***

You will need access to a device. We would discourage the use of phones since they will not work well with the instructional videos. Any worksheet a teacher creates will be available in both digital and hardcopy format. MES teachers will post office hours for the eLearning window and will be available to assist students and parents during those times. Computer labs will be open after school and the Saturday of the eLearning window.

## ***Will a 4th grade student be allowed to bring his/her Chromebook home during an eLearning window?***

Yes.

## ***How much work should I expect my student to receive?***

An eLearning day counts as a full day of school so Lesson Suites are designed to mirror a normal day in the classroom. MCS teachers and administrators will work to ensure the workload and expectations are relevant and reasonable.

## ***How will attendance be taken?***

In order to be counted “present” during an eLearning day, students must complete and submit assigned work. Individual teachers will communicate his/her expectations regarding the specifics about assignment completion.

## ***Will teachers be available to answer questions about assignments?***

All MCS teachers will communicate/post their office hours for the eLearning window. A teacher is expected to be available either online or in person to answer questions and facilitate learning. Each individual teacher will establish his/her own office hours.

## ***I am having trouble logging on. Who should I contact?***

A phone number for technical support will be provided prior to the eLearning day.

## ***Does a student have to do the work on Saturday?***

No. Work can be completed anytime during the eLearning window (Wednesday prior to the eLearning Saturday though the Monday after the eLearning Saturday).

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<sup>1</sup>Blended Learning - a combination of digital and traditional instructional strategies

<sup>2</sup>Lesson Suite - term branded by MCS for teacher-created eLearning lesson plans

# eLearning **FAQ** continued . . .

## ***If I am a parent or guardian of a K-3 student, will I need to help them?***

This may depend on the grade level/assignment. Teachers will model lesson content and expectations through direct instruction (digital or written directions). In most cases, the amount of help a parent would need to provide would be similar to the amount of help provided on any other assignment a child might bring home. Students may need help accessing online content if the family chooses to complete the assignment electronically.

## ***Why are we doing an eLearning Day? As a parent, I would rather add an extra day to the end of the year.***

The eLearning format allows MCS to provide instruction during critical learning times and maintain the momentum established in the classroom. eLearning utilizes technology to create blended learning opportunities which will expose our students to avenues of learning beyond the traditional classroom.

## ***What if I am out of town or ill during the eLearning window?***

As with any absence, we will follow the student handbook guidelines for making up work.

## ***Who should I contact if I have questions about eLearning?***

Please contact your building principal.

**MES:** Joseph\_Rodgers@mcsk12.in.us

**MIS:** Randy\_Self@mcs.k12.in.us

**MJSHS:** Jon\_Lippe@mcs.k12.in.us

**MCS Curriculum Director:** Sue\_Gnagy@mcs.k12.in.us

