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Hello families,

We write to share our next steps in our “online connective efforts” as we remain closed for an additional week.

We want to provide the most consistency that we can to help structure the monotony of the days. Last week, our staff uploaded several documents to Google Classroom as resources for our children to access. Case managers sent individual messages to students’ families that included specific information about what they can expect regarding activities, resources, and in some cases, additional materials and username/passcodes. The material provided is/was designed to help students review previous work, provide reminders of “outstanding” homework, and extra-curricular activities. Teachers scanned in student work, provided references, graphic organizers, step by step directions on techniques, and engaging video links. Reading and math specialists, therapists, teachers, and clinicians all contributed to providing our students with a variety of opportunities to stay engaged. School psychologists have also had direct contact with various students and remain available as needed. There is much joy in seeing students submitting their work on Google Classroom again since these activities became available.

Staff will continue to provide announcements and activities throughout the upcoming week. They continue to assess what is being completed and will continue to ensure it is enough for our kids to be engaged. This week, we are providing a schedule (to be sent by the case manager) for our students to connect each day with each other and staff. MDS is excited to have direct contact and engagement in the days ahead. We are moving toward a more structured check-in. Starting Thursday, our students will have at least one face to face interaction with students, as well as one therapy group. Every Monday - Thursday, your children will have the opportunity to participate in a 30-minute check-in at a time to be shared separately from this letter. The staff will be holding sessions via Google hangout. Directions will follow and be posted in the student’s Google classrooms. The meetings will include content teachers and counselors, as well as in many cases, a therapist, specialist,



case manager, and/or Kirsten. In addition, our students will have a scheduled group therapeutic check-in time. On Friday, homeroom teachers will hold a Bulldog Pride time to wrap up the week. Additionally, the case manager's will send a weekly communication to summarize the week's events.

Our staff is motivated to provide other opportunities for fruitful and engaging experiences to promote socialization. There will be a variety of optional unique experiences throughout the week. Some of the activities may be Read Aloud, Poetry, Just Dance, Yoga, DIY home science experiments, or maybe cooking. Our staff will be checking with students on what they might be interested in participating in. From there, we will coordinate the "HOW" for these activities to be set up so our students can join in the fun.

We know it is extremely difficult to juggle work and school. We encourage families to do the best they can to support this interaction and engagement. We hope to have our kids access this support and join the sessions.

Please know that all staff will be checking emails while we are temporarily closed. We understand that some children may need individual check-ins. Please email your child's case manager and let them know if this is something your student would benefit from. Some children are already emailing and seeking out staff and advocating. This is a tremendous skill and should be encouraged. For families, please email questions to case managers as they remain the direct point of contact.

During these times, we want to remember we are a community that can get through anything, even COVID 19.

Be well,

Kirsten and Gillian