Learning at Home Special Edition: Please continue to check our Bellevue School District Resources webpage for additional services and community resources to help your family through this challenging time. You also will find many links at the end of this newsletter.

News of the Week—Briefs & Detailed
There’s a lot of news this week. I hope this serves as a sign of progress we are making toward learning at home.

This seems like a long list, but all are just a few sentences or paragraphs long.

- Two Challenges & How We Can Meet Them Together
- Motivate Your Student to Lean into Learning
- Seize This Opportunity to Forget Grades and Focus On Growth
- Student Survey May Add Context for Your Teen
- Lessons Now Will Impact Fall Grades
- Stripped of the Structure School Provides, Students Feeling Adrift
- Ideas to Help Your Student Reach Out to Classmates
- Use Financial Learning Games to Bring Focus on Where Effort Will Matter
- New Last Day of School Announced
- Hear More About Grades, Student Support & Next Year from District Leaders
- Build Community Ties Around Your Student with Simple Gestures Next Week
- First Event Celebrating Seniors Happens Next Week
- Student Fines Pending; Wait for Materials Return & Refunds
- Mr. Prufer Launches Recognition of Newport Alums in Healthcare
- Grading Policy Set for Second Semester 2020—Details from Dr. Duran
- Summer School Plans Pending
- Pandemic Related Advice to Juniors from College Dean
- Teens Can Earn Community Service Hours from Home
- Students Can Earn Community Service Hours from Home
- Use Curbside Service to Exchange Faulty Laptops & Other District Devices
- Newport Band Auction Meets Goals Online—Thank you!
- Opt in for Urgent Text Message from Newport & BSD
- Ocean Science Club Takes Top National Prize
- Tip to Optimize Internet Performance
- Help Motivate Your Students with Traits that Help Them Shine
- Young Entrepreneur Academy Information
- Green Genius Offers At-Home Activities
- Family Support Resources Changes
Two Challenges We Can Meet; But, Like So Much These Days, It’s Going to Take Working Together

I’m consistently hearing two challenges from everyone—families, teachers, and students:

- How do I motivate my student or myself when we know most students can get an A just by participating?
- How can we keep our students or ourselves socially connected while we keep physical distance?
I’m offering both advice and information below that I hope will help families, students, and staff.

Try to remember for yourself and remind your student that we all struggle with motivation right now. You and your teen are not alone in this. The loss of structure, the uncertainties, the urgent need for new technology skills all leave us adrift. I hear it from colleagues, college students, my family, and the news—finding focus and energy feels too daunting.

**Keep Repeating: Learn for Yourself & Your Future**
I have said this before, but I know students need to keep hearing it:

- At Newport, we believe that each student is committed to giving their best effort in all facets of their lives. This applies to school, non-school, graded and non-graded activities.
- **Giving your best effort is a life habit**, an expectation of excellence out of yourself. Investing in yourself shouldn’t be something that you do only when you expect something back; it’s something you do to prepare yourself for your future.
- Remind your students not to consider if something is graded or not. Instead, encourage them to **remember to take advantage of any opportunity** you have this day and in this place to learn all you can and practice giving yourself 100%.
- Grades matter now, but this **character trait will matter always**.

**Seize This Opportunity to Forget Grades and Focus on Growth**
As teachers, we dream of a classroom where students love to learn and focus their energy on discovery and understanding—not grades. While necessary in our current system, ultimately our students don’t need grades. They need knowledge and skills.

Some of the anxiety this generation feels stems from the role grades play in college entry and stepping into a career. Students never quite know what their grade will be until someone else evaluates their work. If teens focus on understanding instead, **motivation comes from within as they reach for mastery and know immediately when they’ve grasped it**.

As a staff, we’ve discussed the opportunity that “A grades for all” gives us. We have a window here to allow our students to **know what striving for understanding rather than grades feels like**. If you joined us in talking to our students about this opening, we can capitalize on 4th-quarter learning to **shift our students to a Growth Mindset**.

**Lessons Now Will Impact Fall Grades**
While second semester grades may have lost their usual meaning, the learning that happens in May and June will impact grades next fall and beyond.

Building on the theme of giving your best, families need to remind students of the impact their efforts will have on fall grades—and beyond.
We have narrowed class content to the concepts critical to future learning and work. Students must master that knowledge and those skills before they tackle the next course in a sequence. If they back off their growth now, it will stunt their learning and success in future courses.

Help Your Student Build Context by Hearing from Others
We received 559 responses to our survey of students about their experiences learning at home. I'll share more in the coming weeks, but the results for the following questions allow your student to see where in our community they stand compared to the experiences of others. Clearly, students’ experiences share much in common.

Notice in this chart that the majority of students are spending several hours on schoolwork each day:

Here students share about the challenges in learning at home: and in the second graph, we see that staying focused poses a challenge to half our students. These may help to pinpoint the challenges your student faces.
As your students learn at home, you are seeing firsthand the executive-function weakness in their developing brains.

Before the pandemic dramatically changed our daily routines, many of our students seemed to manage quite well with planning, organization, and focus—so much so that one could imagine that
their brains had finished developing the executive function abilities in their frontal lobe. Usually, these abilities don’t mature until young adults reach their mid-twenties.

Now, with the structure and routines of the school day stripped away, we see more clearly how much—or how little—skill our teens have developed for managing themselves.

You can help your student work on building those planning and organizing skills while working with them to build structure and routines at home. Keep in mind that the structure for home learning requires varying levels of specific schedules, clear daily tasks, and how-to instruction for planning.

**Chunking Makes Learning Stick**
I’ve attached a blank worksheet that may help your student plan out their days. Don’t forget to include breaks. Students learn best when they vary activity every 15 to 20 minutes among tasks such as reading, listening to instruction, practicing a new skill, completing an assignment, working with classmates, etc. Among educators, we call it “chunking.”

**I Repeat: You Are Not Alone In These Challenges**
Your students must hear over and over that they are not alone in their challenges. Every teen at Newport feels them. You can see by the next two graphs from our survey that most of our students feel isolated and lonely.

Curtailing social interaction hits teens particularly hard because their biochemistry is driving them toward connections outside their family. Nature has set us up to learn in our teens to live
independent of our family. It's natural for your teens to crave interaction with their friends and classmates.

Show your student these graphs so that they realize that their classmates are waiting for contact as well. Encourage them to be the one to reach out. Our staff is doing this as well.

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12. Which of the following best describes how you feel about learning at home?

- 36.3% Happy, fine
- 19.2% Sad, lonely
- 26.0% Overwhelmed, frustrated
- 13.5% Other - Write In
- 5.0% Excited, enjoying it
Here are just a few suggestions for digital outreach:

- Gather a few musicians through video connections for a jam session;
- Buddy up with a classmate to study for AP exams;
- Ask classmates if they have good ideas for home study spaces and share video tours;
- Work together over video to create some form of recognition for front-line workers;
- Convene a Virtual Art Show;
- Cook Together Over Zoom

Club Activities Reopening
Staff also will begin reaching out to club members to restart activities—but only those that honor physical-distancing guidelines. Encourage your student to contact other club members and get a head start.

Don’t Let Them Wait to Feel Better
We have evidence everywhere of a basic human fact: action leads feeling. We don’t feel grateful unless we first practice gratitude. We don’t feel optimistic unless we practice seeing the possibilities in situations. We don’t feel less lonely until we reach out to others.

If you have good luck with any form of prodding and reminding that gets your teens to take action, please share. They don’t instinctively know these things. They haven’t badly needed them until now. We need to work together to teach them to support each other. They must reach out to support others before they will feel the support of a community.
Real Life Scenarios May Make the Value of Giving Your Best More Real
Use the information in this article to make the importance of learning and excellence more real for your student. Edutopia has compiled a list of free, popular, and quality financial education games. Playing these games together simulates adult responsibilities for students. Family game night with one of these may offer an opportunity for the do-my-best motivation conversation in a more meaningful moment.

Last Day of School Changed
Our school year will end June 19. Snow makeup days were waived by the state so we will return to our original end date.

While some school districts have decided to close early, our superintendent Ivan Duran has announced that with the learning we have been able to offer, we will continue through the end of the year.

Learn More About Grading, Services, Student Support & Next Year
Dr. Ivan Duran’s Teams virtual meeting this morning highlighted many of the questions on all our minds. He held an hour-long discussion involving leaders from throughout the district.

Topics included the following:

- Answered a wide variety of common questions submitted by the community,
- Values and thinking behind grading and other learning decisions,
- Examples of how our district is addressing challenges.
- Scenarios for fall school options—including social distancing in our buildings and learning from home.

School Board member and Newport parent Francine Wiest also joined the conversation. She emphasized the need for families to respond to surveys coming from the district over the next weeks.

“We appreciate the time everyone is taking to fill out the surveys. We need the direction. We want to capture what is working well and what needs to be improved. We appreciate the comments—from the frustrations to the successes,” she said.

You will find a recording of the meeting here.

Also, subscribe to the Bellevue School YouTube channel where we post this and many other videos on our district and how to navigate it.
Use Staff Recognition Activities to Build the Community You Want for Your Teen

Our PTSA hospitality chair, Indira Pallinti, has planned a fun week of activities to honor our teachers—not just for the learning these professional provide.

I’m proud of the sense of belonging and community that we are building at Newport. It’s far from perfect, but I’ve watched it grow steadily in my five years here. Each year, our student survey reflects a greater feeling of comfort, support, and safety among our teens.

That change reflects in part our partnership with parents at home. Teachers also have pushed this change, along with our student leaders.

Join me next week for this important building block in our learning community. These recognitions create the ties that later wrap around our students as they grow.

The complete schedule for the week was emailed earlier this week and is attached.

Seniors Begin Graduation Celebrations

Plans to celebrate our seniors are taking shape. The first step is distribution next Friday of a yard sign for each student and their graduation regalia (caps, gowns, capes, cords & more). I’ve attached the detailed plan if you are curious, but essentially, we’ve created a no-contact, drive-through event.

The event will accomplish more than the distribution. We’ll use it to test an idea for staging part of our graduation celebrations outdoors in June.

My thanks to the PTSA—which means most of you—for providing half the funding for the signs.

Honestly, I’m just looking forward to seeing our students and families—from six feet away.

For families who cannot make it to the event—be it illness, transportation issues, work, or whatever—we have alternative plans to get the items to our seniors.
Student Fines Pending; Senior Event Will Test Run a Collection System
Many of you have noticed fines on your student accounts for overdue library books or other fees.

- First—For now, **please wait to see if fees resolve**. We will **announce a date** when you can check again for any remaining fees.
- Second, we will **collect items from students**. If distribution of senior items in the parking lot goes well next week, we have plans for a similar system for families to return school property (e.g., laptops, uniforms, books, etc.).
- Third, we are working through accounts for all the students across the district to **remove or refund fees** paid for field trips, sports, clubs, etc.
- Finally, we will **let you know when these steps are complete**. You can either **follow-up on any remaining fees** that you think should be removed or **pay the fines** through our online [Touchbase](#) system.
If your family is leaving the area and you need to return laptops now, please call the Help Desk for information.
Help Desk PHONE: 425.456.4321 | FAX: 425.456.4666 | help@bsd405.org | 7am – 4:30pm

**Rob Prufer Reaches Out to Honor Former Students Now in Healthcare**
Newport Social Studies teacher and Bellevue Art Museum art history lecturer Rob Prufer has created a **YouTube event to honor his former students who are now working on the front lines of managing the COVID-19 pandemic.** He has sprinkled their names throughout the Loggia. Here’s his message:

“I’ve been really moved by my dozens and dozens of former students who have gone into healthcare in various fields. So out of gratitude for them, I created a virtual Loggia Lecture that explores a remarkable healthcare institution in Renaissance Florence.

“If you should find a little time and want to nerd out with me about great art, architecture and social history, click here for the first ever virtual Loggia.

“Excuse the shameless self-promotion. Honestly, it’s my fan letter to the kids—except they’re not kids anymore.”

**Dr. Duran Announces Grading Policy for Second Semester**
Dr. Duran wrote to families late last week with the information below regarding the district’s plans for second semester 2020 grades.

First, he reiterated key commitments that we will continue to honor:

- **Providing equitable access:** We will ensure that all students have a device and access to the internet to engage with learning. If they do not, we will provide it. Remote learning is designed to be flexible and accessible.
- **Ensuring seniors graduate:** We are tracking the progress of all seniors and working so that all graduate on time according to their educational plan.
- **Supporting student well-being:** We know that social connection with classmates is key to student mental health. This includes creating space for celebrating milestones of our seniors and creating opportunities for all students to engage with their peers. In addition, we know that the current circumstances have been challenging for many of our families and we are providing nutrition and other supports to ensure our students and their families have what they need.
- **Preparing students for the next level:** We have identified key learning targets for the fourth quarter to prepare all students for the next grade level, with particular attention to literacy and math at the elementary and middle school levels.
Following Directives from Washington State Officials
Dr. Duran said that we know that many of you have been awaiting further clarification about grading during this time.
Earlier this week, we received guidance from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). We used that guidance, in addition to our priorities to develop a grading plan that we believe best meets the needs of Bellevue students.

Our approach accounts for the diverse circumstances our students are experiencing. It also gives students the opportunity to work toward subject mastery over the course of the remaining academic year and into next fall if necessary.

- High school students in grades 9-12 will receive an “A” if they regularly engage in the assigned activities and meet the minimum curriculum standards.
- Students who do not engage with learning assigned by their teacher(s) or do not meet minimum curriculum standards will receive an “I” (for incomplete).
- All teachers are committed to following up with students often to encourage participation.
- Incompletes can be made up anytime during summer school or fall semester.
- Additional guidance will be provided to high school educators, students and families.

Summer School Announcements Expected Soon
Bellevue Schools is reviewing Summer Programs and working with the state office of the superintendent to determine if we will be permitted to hold in person classes or if courses will be offered online.

Registration will open as soon as the plans are finalized. For the most recent information, please follow the BSD Summer Programs page.

College Dean Offers Assurance to Juniors
Through this link you will find an article and a letter that can help juniors and their families think about next year and beyond.

The Washington Post article details many of the issues and includes a letter from Andrew B. Palumbo, Dean of Admissions & Financial Aid Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Bellevue School Director of Counseling suggested that the letter (although from one college) reflects the information that she has received from many colleges and universities.
Your Teen Can Earn Hours for Mask Making & Other Projects
Check our Newport webpages for many ideas that will allow students to earn community service hours during these weeks at home.

More than the credits toward graduation and Knight Valor awards, this work can help your student maintain strong mental health amid all the uncertainty.

Making masks for local hospitals is considered community service. Please have students record their hours and enter into x2vol.

The Seattle Times featured advice for choosing where to volunteer during this time when needs are so great. Check the details here.

Click this link to learn how to enter hours served.

Having Trouble with a Device; Curbside Exchange Available
Curbside device pickup/exchange is now available for families and staff. To provide additional flexibility, the Technology department offers curbside service for students who need to pick up or exchange devices. More information: Spanish | English

Newport Band Auction Succeeds Online
HUGE THANKS to all the supporters of Newport Band who participated in our online auction by offering items, bidding and donating generously. You have made our fundraising efforts in this unprecedented time a resounding SUCCESS. We are so grateful to you for your incredible support!!

Asking Families to Opt-In for Text Messages
Did you know you can receive important alerts from BSD via text? Just text "Y" or "YES" to BSD’s short code number - 67587 - to receive text messages.

If you ever want to opt-out, text the same number or reply to one of our messages with "Stop."

We recommend saving the short code number in your contacts to avoid third-party blocking systems with interfering with your receipt of important messages and updates from the district. The Bellevue School District utilizes SchoolMessenger to deliver text messages.

Ocean Science Club Takes Top Prize in National Competition—Working Virtually
The past two weeks our all women Ocean Science club has been virtually competing in the National Ocean Science Bowl. Our team did amazingly well. This year the event was split into two separate competitions- the Science Expert Briefing, and the Ocean Bowl.
Our Knights placed 6th in the nation in the Bowl—over 500 teams competed in regional Bowls, 25 of which moved on to Nationals.

And in the Science Expert Briefing, Newport WON the whole thing! For this part of the competition- students were given a piece of proposed legislation (in this case, an oil spill law) and asked to prepare stakeholder views of the proposed law. Then, they had to come together and form a consensus on the proposed legislation.

Their written document—over 35 pages long—was submitted for the competition. After the submission- they had to present their case to a mock Congressional subcommittee. The committee asked each member questions about their proposals and about the group’s consensus statement.

This team was so professional that the President of the Centers for Ocean Science Research told them they should all be doing this professionally—they were THAT GOOD!

Thank you to the outstanding NHS teachers—and club advisor Megan Gray. Their work was truly represented in every subject these students have taken over their time at Newport.

This group was given special permission from the district to compete as a club (most club activity has been put on hold).

Quick Tip: Optimize Your Internet Connection
There are a few things that all of us can do to improve our connectivity. Use a wired connection or relocate as close to your router/modem as possible. Reboot your router/modem and device - at least weekly!

Consider turning off Wi-Fi enabled devices in your home (security cameras, doorbells, TVs and printers, baby monitors, etc.) and file-syncing services (Google Drive, DropBox, etc.) when you are not using them.

Talk to You Student about These Values as They Search for Motivation at Home
April Students of the Month Nominated by Teachers:

CTE: Not only a dedicated student but also a great person. Her attitude is positive, her caring for others is obvious, and the thoughtfulness she brings to the classroom an encouragement. She is mature for her years and has been a true pleasure to work with. ~Mr. Kilcup

SCIENCE: One of those rare students that you can always count on and she has a wicked sharp sense of humor! I LOVE it. She is a kindhearted, fun, brilliant, kid who is a total STAR. ~Mr. Brown
P.E.: Remarkable job training for the 5k before transitioning to remote learning. She leads by example in a quiet, business-like manner and consistently demonstrates grit and determination in a PE unit that is very challenging for most students. ~Mr. Miller

SOCIAL STUDIES: Outstanding student and even better person! She has shown a lot of courage and resilience in learning a new subject like AP Human Geography. She asks good questions and remains persistent until she finds a good answer. Hailey is incredibly kind, thoughtful, and appreciative. ~Mr. Grimes

MATH: Interested and interesting student who livened up our Business Pre-Calc class with entertaining explanations at the white board. He was always supportive of his fellow students and willing to help them through a problem in small group or pairs. When the class moved online, he would unmute and join the conversation, and when the cameras came online, he was the first one to turn his camera on which made class that much more fun. ~Ms. Stratton

HEALTH: True gem in our class. She comes to class every day prepared and ready to learn a new topic. Each time she speaks in our class, her responses are well-thought out taking into consideration multiple perspectives. I admire the empathy and compassion she holds for everyone that surrounds her. I truly miss seeing her in class. Thank you for working so hard during this weird online transition. I love seeing the time and effort you put into your classes, including all your creative notetaking in fun colors. Thank you for making our Newport community that much more loving and kinder. ~Ms. Feder

LEADERSHIP: Switching to online school can be really tough, and he has done a fantastic job trying his best to engage and asking for help when he needs it. He is going out of his way to communicate with his teachers to ensure he is on the track to success. Not only is he a strong self-advocate, he is also kind and gracious to all. We are lucky to have him in our community!~Ms. Parker

LEADERSHIP: Activity seeking opportunities to stay connected socially during the shutdown and has created a safe conversation space monitored by staff to allow continued connection." ~ Ms. McGee

WORLD LANGUAGE: While they have enjoyed a semi-private community nested within the level 5 class, splitting the class has taken an extra demand now in the virtual setting. Have taken lead roles in coordinating this group and keeping us all on track and together by communicating with me, showing up always early for our early sessions at 8:30, and fully participating in our Teams discussions. I am so grateful for their leadership that I look forward to our class now particularly in order just to have authentic conversations with them more than I could during normal school. ~Madame Eastman

ELL: participated in all the online live meetings and private tutorial sessions and has reached out to Mrs. Regan for additional help when she needs it. She has been working hard to keep up with assignments and she tries her best." ~Mr. Deshayes, Ms. Regan & Ms. Ries
ENGLISH: One of the hardest working students I have ever met. She has a 100% genuine desire to learn and grow – as well as an unwavering tenacity to pursue her goals. Never afraid to ask questions and help others, Evelyn has been a leader in our physical classroom, as well as our new digital space. A current and future world shaper – thank you for being you. We are all the better for it. ~Dr. Troutman

Young Entrepreneurs Academy Goes Virtual
The Bellevue Chamber is offering their first virtual Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) this year. The class will be an accelerated program that will take place for three weeks in June. Students are guided through each step of starting an enterprise - from brainstorming an idea to pitching their business plan to investors. Classroom learning is anchored by real-world applications. LEARN MORE

Green Genius Offers Home Activities
The Bellevue School District is partnering with the City of Bellevue to help students and families be green at home. The "Green Genius" at home activity guides help students learning how to conserve water and energy, make crafts from reusable materials and more. LEARN MORE

RESOURCES for FAMILIES & STUDENTS

We are continuing to update and add new resources to our district Coronavirus (COVID-19) webpage and our Newport website. Here are highlights:

Family Connections Centers
The district is currently operating three Family Connections Centers that are open Monday through Friday. These centers are focused on supporting all students and families and specialize in connecting families with district and community support services.

Sites and Hours:

- Lake Hills Elementary, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Sammamish High School, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Stevenson Elementary, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

LEARN MORE

Free Meals for Kids & Teens
As the effects of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continue to impact members of our community, we know that access to food is a growing concern for an increasing number of families.
The Bellevue School District is offering free meals for children 18 and younger. There are locations throughout Bellevue for grab and go meals and pre-order is available.

Students do not need to be enrolled in the Free & Reduced Lunch program to receive meals.

Visit bsd.org/freemeals2020 for more information. Or preorder by phone: Call (425) 456-4507 between 7 and 8:45 AM, Monday through Friday, for same-day delivery to scheduled locations.

**Expanded Grab and Go Locations**

Four new locations are available for Grab & Go meal pickup. LEARN MORE

- Eastgate Elementary
- Newport Heights Elementary
- Sherwood Forest Elementary
- Tillicum Middle School

**New Essential Resources Hotline**

A new essential resources hotline phone number is available for families. Families can get help accessing information about district services and information on community resources. Multiple languages are available. LEARN MORE

**Well-Being and Mental Health**

During this time of uncertainty and limited interactions, families are facing new challenges and concerns. BSD staff have compiled some web-based resources. LEARN MORE

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