



Reed News

May 8, 2020

Dear Reed Families and Caregivers,

Let me begin this letter by expressing heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the entire Reed staff for all the expressions of appreciation you shared with us throughout this week of Staff Appreciation. Thank you!

Is kindergarten registration still open?

Yes! If you haven't yet registered your child for kindergarten or you know any friends or neighbors who have not yet registered their child, please let them know they can reach out to Juli at jtantum@reedschools.org. Juli is available to answer questions as well as provide you the registration link.

Can I still pick up the paper & supplies that were made available to families?

Certainly! Simply contact Isabelle at imoattar@reedschools.org and she will arrange to meet you in the front circle. Supplies available are limited to: printer paper, glue sticks, pencils, and crayons.

Calling all library books!

We would greatly appreciate gathering library books so we can begin re-shelving in preparation for next year. If you are able, please swing by the front circle either Tuesday or Thursday between 11:00am-noon to drop off library books. Thank you!

Mindfulness

As I participate in Google Meets I am overjoyed to see sessions begin with mindful breathing and other mindfulness activities. In many of the sessions, students are leading their peers in the breathing exercises. They are doing this naturally and with ease; it has simply become a part of who they are. I am so grateful that Reed School embraced Mindfulness and I am further grateful to our PTA for sponsoring Mindfulness assemblies for our families earlier in the year. I think now more than ever, the practice of mindfulness can give us access to a few moments of much needed calm and peace.

Some thoughts...

There is no question that this experience of Distance Learning has been fraught with challenges and loss. School has changed in ways no one could have imagined. It is natural to think about all the things we miss, to think about the way things were, to think about what has been lost. It also is natural to be a bit worried about how our children will fare moving forward. That said, please know that Reed teachers and staff are ready, excited, and completely confident to meet students exactly where they are at when we reopen. We are confident that our children will continue to thrive and be successful!

Reasons for Optimism & Small Blessings

If there is one thing I have learned, it is that human beings are remarkably adaptable; this is exceptionally true for children. Reed students have proven this to us this past year. They were resilient during school closures for rolling black outs, they were resilient during the extreme heat wave in the fall, and they have been remarkably resilient throughout this period of distance learning. This call for resilience has been thrust upon them and they have shown us how incredibly adaptable, flexible, and strong they truly are. They will carry these traits throughout their lives. I am choosing to see this as an unexpected gift and a

blessing.

Children in kindergarten through second grade are in the acquisition stage of learning. This is a time when they develop and acquire the foundational skills needed to shift to content based learning that typically begins in grade 3. Some call the foundational learning years the “learning to read” stage in preparation for the “reading to learn” stage that follows. It is our mission at Reed School to guide students to develop the foundational skills necessary to be successful after this developmental stage. I think together we are doing this—even in this time of distance learning. And in many ways, I think our children are learning more than we could have anticipated.

Collaboration: Everyday, our students are going online and seeing teachers collaborate to bring lessons forward. They are viewing collaborative kindergarten messages, collaborative music lessons, collaborative pre-recorded lessons. Over and over again, our kids are seeing **the village** that is working collaboratively to provide lessons and learning opportunities. I can only imagine the positive effect this is having on our students. They are internalizing that together we can achieve great things.

Older Student Models: Distance Learning has created an opportunity for Del Mar students to reach out and be models for our Reed kids. Each week they create videos to be shared on Specialist Wednesday. These remarkable middle school students promote spirit week and teach games to our students. The village just keeps expanding! Our kids are learning what they too can do one day.

Parents and Caregivers as Teachers: While this experience is no doubt a blend of joy and total frustration, there is a truth that comes from it. Your children are watching you try. They see you persevering. They see you sacrificing. They feel your support. This distance learning experience will at some point become a memory, but the effects will endure. What a gift!

Access to Learning Apps: While no app could **ever** replace a teacher, we are fortunate that our children have access to and facility using quality learning apps. Lexia, Dreambox, and Todo Math are quality programs that support the acquisition of foundational skills. A few minutes of practice each day can foster the development of a wide array of foundational skills.

Digital Literacy: While the balance may be a bit “off” at present, our children are being immersed in digital literacy. The need for this skill will be ever present (at some level) throughout their lives.

Independence, Flexibility, Perseverance, and Adaptability: No need to elaborate. Our kids are learning and modeling this everyday. It has become part of their DNA!

Gratitude: This challenging time has created seemingly infinite opportunities to express gratitude for our blessings. Our children are immersed in hearing and participating in these expressions of gratitude. Another gift!

Thank you Reed families for all you are doing and continue to do. We know the future will bring even more change and we are ready to embrace it. My confidence comes from knowing that I work with such an amazing team of educators. We are confident that our remarkable students will thrive. We cannot wait to see you all again. Together we will create what it means to do school post shelter in place.

I wish a very Happy Mother’s Day to all our moms.

Warmly,
Mary Niesyn