March 18, 2020

Watchdog Nation,

The purpose of this letter is to share information regarding how we will learn while the nation works through the COVID-19 pandemic. Since last week, your child’s teachers have been brainstorming, planning, creating, curating resources, and reflecting on how best to provide a meaningful learning experience for your child(ren). At school, the custodial, maintenance, and transportation departments have been tirelessly working to clean, sanitize, and disinfect our buildings and vehicles.

**How will we know what to do?** By 9:00 a.m. on Monday, March 23, 2020, your child will receive an email message through his or her k-12 account regarding where to find and access course materials. Please take a few moments to review this information with your child. If your child has multiple classes, he or she will receive a message for each class. Enclosed with this letter is your child’s k-12 account information. If your child needs help accessing information, please contact Mrs. James by email (Renee.James@k12.sd.us) or phone (1-605-763-4227). On our middle school and high school website menus, you will find a COVID-19 section. In the COVID-19 section, you will find our Student Online Learning Protocols, a compiled listing of course activities/plans for the week (Beresford Middle School & Beresford High School) and a copy of this letter.

**How does my child get help from his or her teacher?** Each educator will have specific times during the day where his or her primary focus pertains to assisting learners who have questions, need help, who are stuck, etc. We have coined these hours as “office hours.” These hours will be advertised to students via Monday’s email message. Office hours will take in a virtual/online setting. In addition to office hours, teachers will regularly check their email, and students are encouraged to connect with teachers via email when stuck (e.g., outside of office hours).
What if I do not have internet access, and my child can travel to school? If your child needs access to resources and can travel to school, we need you or your child to call 1-605-763-2139 to set up a time where your child can work in a monitored and socially distanced setting. Appointments must be made before a student arrives. When a student arrives, we will provide the child with a sanitary/disinfected space to work. We will practice social distancing to provide these opportunities. Therefore, we need you or your child to call ahead to arrange for the time and space. When a child leaves, we will clean, sanitize, and disinfect his or her workspace. To get academic help, a child will need to access his or her teacher via office hours or send an email message.

What if I do not have internet access, and my child cannot travel to school during the day? Please contact us directly at 1-605-763-2139 (office), 1-605-368-0264 (Mr. Gross’ cell phone), or 1-605-214-5510 (Dr. Degen’s cell phone). We will work with your classroom teachers, you, your child, and your family to make arrangements that allow learning to happen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What suggestions do you have as we navigate these uncharted waters? We are encouraging staff, students, parents, and community members to practice flexible thinking. Flexible thinking is about being able to change perspectives, generate alternatives, and consider options (Kallick & Costa, 1996). Flexible thinking is a must as we work through the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to practicing flexible thinking, I encourage all of our stakeholders to engage in frequent communication regarding learning needs, learning challenges, and next steps. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child’s classroom teachers. We are in this journey together. To experience the most success, we need all of our key players to communicate and be flexible thinkers.

Respectfully yours,

Dustin Degen, Ed.D.
6-12 Principal