



March 22, 2020

Dear Moms & Dads (and probably grandparents and all other loved ones who are helping during this time),

Tomorrow we embark on a new journey! I don't think I could have ever imagined a scenario where we're asking of you what we're about to ask of you – which is to take a leading role in the teaching of your children and young adults. I want to share a couple of things about where we're at and where we're headed. Thanks in advance for taking a few minutes to read through this message...

First a word of thanks. **THANK YOU** for supporting GISD during this time. Your Facebook posts and emails and kind words in our distribution lines mean the WORLD to us! THANK YOU for giving us this past week with no activity so that we could have TIME to prepare for what's to come. We wanted to be thoughtful about how to approach remote learning and I can't thank you enough for giving our teachers the time and space to process, learn, plan and prepare for this transition. And finally, THANK YOU for what you are about to do! We know you didn't sign up for this and WE ARE HERE – ready and able – to support you, cheer you on and teach your kiddos from afar.

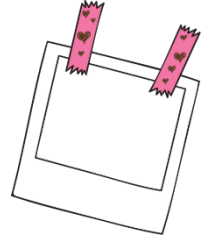
Second – what this next week looks like (March 23-27) is not what this will look like moving forward. We are still working on equipping all of our families with technology and internet and as soon as we do that, we will begin to transition to online learning. At the same time, we are equipping our staff with the tools they need, building an online platform and learning what effective remote learning looks like. Know that some direct instruction is coming soon (whether via posted videos or live & recorded Zoom meetings) and we will continue to get better.

Third - while we are not the experts at schooling at home, we wanted to share a few tips to get you rolling.

1. **Set Up Your Space** – It is so important to have a space for school. Have your kids help set up that space and decide where “school” is going to take place. It doesn't have to be fancy (we're using the kitchen table). Maybe start unloading materials tonight.
2. **Decide on Your Schedule** – We do not expect our students to have school from 8:00-3:35 tomorrow (*and if you find it is taking that long – please reach out to us*). We know you are juggling your own work schedules as well, so it may look like late afternoons and weekends for your families – but it is so important to set and keep some sort of schedule.

3. **Start Slow & Take Breaks** – We have these built into our day and we'd encourage this for you as well. We have encouraged our teachers to not try to replicate a regular school day and we encourage you to do the same.
4. **Let Us Know Your Needs** – Our teaching staff is just an email or Zoom call away. Please don't hesitate to reach out! There are also some great free sites like [Khan Academy](#) that has great short videos particularly for math & science (all grades/courses) that are helpful!
5. **Give Yourself Grace.** This is an unprecedented time. There is so much angst – about everything (from the news to very real fears about financial security to calculating how long your current toilet paper supply will last). We're all in this together and we're so thankful for your willingness to help support the learning at home.

We'd love to end on a light note. Help us celebrate the "first" day of school at home. Please post pictures of your kids tomorrow in their learning spaces as we venture together into these uncharted waters. We asked our staff for a hashtag that could describe this new phase and put out a flash poll online. The winner was **#TigerHomeTakeover** so please include that tomorrow as you post!



We love you all and MISS you all and please know that there is no other place we'd rather be than in our classrooms with our students! Thanks for ALL the ways you are supporting us and each other during this time!

Dr. Jill Siler
Gunter ISD Superintendent
#TigerHomeTakeover
#StayAtHome

“ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE,
TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH.”

