

## **Re: Ways to Connect and Inclement Weather Reminder**

Dear Manitou Springs School District Community,

It was such a pleasure to welcome students back on campus last Tuesday. It is important that we celebrate every day that we have students on campus. A recent conversation that I had with a high school student went something like this:

Me: It is great to have you back on campus. How is everything going for you?

Student: I love being here. I need routines. I need to be with people.

The conversation continued, but at the heart of our time together was a shared experience where we both agreed about the value and importance of community.

One of the most important aspects of this time is that the “why” for how decisions are made is just as important as the actual decision that was made. Communicating the “why” is always important, but it is especially important now as we continue to move through the school year in ways that are not typical. At times, the communication of the “why” has been a challenge simply because the typical interactions at school events look, sound, and feel different due to the steps we are taking to mitigate potential transmission.

I look forward to the time when we can be together in our typical school ways (e.g., parent volunteers in classes, no restrictions on group gathering sizes whether inside or outside, before and after-school activities that are overflowing with students, and more). The impact to the aspects of school and learning that we love so much will return. Some of those aspects that have been there forever might have been taken for granted, and I know that we long for that day when being together is not complicated.

### **Inclement Weather Reminder:**

**\*If there is a delay, we start 2-hours later.**

**\*\*If there is a cancellation to in-person learning, it will be communicated as an E-Connect Learning Day via local media sources. All learners will participate in an E-Connect Learning Day.**

#### E-Connect Learning Day

- Neither students nor staff report in-person to school/work.
- All students will participate in one synchronous/online session. During this time, students will have a connection with teachers and students. The time will be used to set a goal and intention for the day (e.g., make-up missed assignments, accelerate new learning). The check-in will also include social-emotional supports.
- Principals will provide the school schedule.
- Counselor/Social Worker has an identified time to meet with students (Office Hours).
- Secondary teachers will have a scheduled office hour to support students individually.

MSES-Google Meet (10:00 and 10:30); Teachers will communicate the time for their class.

UPES-Google Meet (10:00-primary or 10:30 intermediate)

MSMS-Google Meet with Advisory (9:30); Staff Office Hour 10:00-11:00

MSHS-Google Meet with Advisory (9:30); Staff Office Hour

### **Ways to remain connected:**

1. Schools' Weekly Newsletters. Our schools have all moved their weekly communications to a similar platform. Those newsletters will continue to be emailed to parents, students, and staff, and the newsletters will be posted on the school's website.

UPES: <https://www.smores.com/4nq35-upe-news-update?ref=email>

MSES: <https://www.smores.com/vqmjp-mustang-ales?ref=email>

MSMS: <https://www.smores.com/34e0r-manitou-springs-middle-school...>

MSSH: <https://msh.mssd14.org/.../January%2022%20Newsletter.pdf>

2. Monthly Virtual Community Update. Since June, we have hosted open virtual meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 3 at 5:00 p.m. Here is the Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89504891076>
3. School Parent Action Committees (PAC) and School Accountability Committees (SAC). If you are interested in learning more about these committees, please reach out to your school's principal. These are excellent ways to be a part of the decision-making process, stay informed along the way, and provide feedback and support to the school. Also, these committees plan exciting opportunities for staff and students.
4. Monthly School Board Meeting. Prior to the pandemic, all Board of Education meetings were held only in-person. A positive outcome is that our monthly BOE meetings are now accessible via Zoom. If you are interested in attending, you can access the information through our website. (<https://go.boarddocs.com/co/mssd14/Board.nsf/Public> )

The next Work Session (4:30 p.m.) and Regular Meeting (6:00 p.m.) is Monday, February 8, 2021.

5. Calling or Emailing. I can be reached at [edomangue@mssd14.org](mailto:edomangue@mssd14.org) or 719-685-2001. I always appreciate opportunities to connect.

Also, I have received questions about when middle school and high school students might return to fully in-person learning. We'll continue to monitor the positivity rates and work hard to not have to quarantine staff and students. This is a significant reason the completion of the [COVID Intake Form](#) is so important and remaining home if you or someone you have been in close contact with has symptoms associated with COVID. Prior to more secondary students returning to fully in-person learning, these changes will be communicated two weeks in advance.

The positivity rates in the county are continuing to decrease, which is so important. Let's continue to work together to play our individual and collective roles. I know this time has not been easy.

My best hope is that we move through this time together positively and collaboratively with creative solutions that also honor community, connection, and compassion.

Again, it has been wonderful to be with students. Let's have a strong second week with students back on campus.

Very sincerely,

Elizabeth Domangue