

Friday, April 3

Spanish

Hello Merrill students and families! Each week we will send out a couple of ideas that you can do at home to stay engaged with Spanish if you would like. These are completely optional and appropriate for grades 6-8.

This week's ideas are:

1. Watch your favorite movie in Spanish or put on Spanish subtitles
2. Tour a virtual museum from a Spanish speaking country or with Spanish artists – ideas: [Frida Kahlo Museum](#), [Museo de Oro](#), [Prado museum](#)
3. Play a game in Spanish – ideas: Go Fish, UNO, Candyland, or any game with numbers and colors

Take care of yourselves!! We miss you!!!

Señora Peckosh
Señora Bachman
Miss Liz
Señora Staudt

Family and Consumer Sciences

Stress- Things are pretty stressful right now. I'm sure you've seen and heard the stress from others on TV and possibly in your home. Here are some resources that talk about stress and how to cope. Identify your top stressors and coping methods. Are these coping methods positive? How can you help others who are stressed out right now?

- Kids Health <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/stress.html>

- Very Well Mind <https://www.verywellmind.com/top-school-stress-relievers-for-students-3145179>

My go to when I was stressed use to be sleep. Usually this didn't solve a lot and just put me under more stress after I woke up. Now I get organized and put on some music! Another thing that can help me is getting outside, especially after the winter and rainy weather we have had.

Hope you are all doing well, Mrs. Sage

Business

What would Grandma Say? I hope you remember this simple rule when it comes to social media and other ways that you communicate with your phone or electronic devices.

Online Profile-what you look like if someone was to research you online. Remember what goes online, stays online. Be smart, don't say or post anything online that you are going to regret later.

All of us have lots of free time and are likely using our phones and electronics to communicate to keep our social distance. BE SMART. A great website if you are looking some activities to work on is code.org

Visual Arts

Greetings everyone! I hope you all are doing well, staying healthy and finding imaginative and fun ways to spend your time. I know Hei Hei (my fish) has been stretching his fins every time I make a move – I don't think the little guy has had so much exercise in his life.

Before I throw out an idea, I want you to know that this is an optional way to spend your time. **It is not required or graded.** It's simply a way to practice drawing and maybe stretch your creativity muscles.

I know through social media and some of your other teachers, that many of you may have been given the idea to journal on your experiences while we are exiled for the good of the realm. I pose the idea of adding a comic to that concept. Sketch what you are doing or experiencing, serious or humorous. If you're struggling with drawing characters, Christopher Hart is the creator of some of the reference books you use in my classroom. I have not viewed all of the videos in his channel, but you may find some of them inspiring or helpful. <https://www.youtube.com/user/chrisartbooks/videos>

Both Mr. Moore and I would love to see any comics, or other artwork you make! On Instagram you can tag @mustang.studio (our school's newish account for visual arts) so we can see your work, or email us. There's also an optional "April drawing challenge" for students and families to participate in on Instagram that @hoyt.heart (Hoyt's visual arts teacher) tagged @mustang.studio under the activities tab. If you and/or your family participate, make sure you tag @mustang.studio to share with us!

I hope you all stay healthy and find ways to keep in high spirits as we cozily sequester like Hobbits!

Ms. Anders and Mr. Moore

Social Distancing Day 15...Hei Hei has mad skills.



Other Notes

I want to draw your attention to Dr. Ahart's announcement from Thursday afternoon. I've highlighted the key line. I know our community will come together to figure this out. Dr. Ahart has made the absolute right decision to keep all of us safe and healthy.

A Statement from Superintendent Tom Ahart

In a virtual meeting today of the Des Moines School Board, Superintendent Thomas Ahart shared his intention that in-person classes would not resume during the 2019-20 school year, and that distance learning would be implemented. Following this afternoon's announcement by Governor Reynolds that recommends schools remain closed through the end of April, Dr. Ahart issued the following statement:

"On any given school day, 40,000 people - students, teachers, staff, parents and volunteers - pass through the doors of public schools in Des Moines. That is a significant number in our city. I believe that re-opening our school doors before the COVID-19 pandemic may have even reached its peak in Polk County is not in the best interest of the health and well-being of this community.

"Earlier this week I directed our leadership team at DMPS to accelerate work on a plan to transition to distance learning for the remainder of this school year. That work includes addressing issues such as equity and accessibility, to make sure all students are able to participate in a meaningful way, one that advances their learning while mitigating the risk to public health. In addition, over the past several days, many of our teachers have already been working on best practices for online education and how their classes can be temporarily taught from afar. I intend to have this plan ready early next week.

"As Superintendent, I do not believe it is fair for our students, staff and families to be expected to operate in short increments of time with little certainty. Additionally, unless we make a wholesale commitment to the very heavy lift required to connect and equip 33,000 students, many of whom do not have home access to the internet or a personal computer, we will not be able to meaningfully serve our students. Let's make a plan now to finish this school year, which is unlike any year we have ever experienced, in a way that is safe for our community AND serves the academic needs of our students. When it comes to the health and safety of students, K-12 public schools should expect no less than Iowa's public universities; hundreds and thousands of people gathering in our schools near the projected height of this pandemic does not serve that purpose."

The local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI Greater Des Moines) has put together a suite of online resources to support people during this difficult time. The site includes a weekly motivational speaker, interactive exercise classes from Farrell's, and many other options. If you are interested in exploring these resources, they can be found at <https://www.weareherewithyou.com/>.

Beginning on Monday, April 6, print materials for PK-8 grade students will be distributed at food sites. Materials will be bound "workbook" style by grade level. Links to the print materials will also be added to the district webpage. This will continue every subsequent Monday throughout the closure. Stay tuned for more information in the coming days.

Take care,
Kate