

Leading Up To Launch  
8/14/20

# From The Principal's Pen

Growing up in the 80s, I was entirely consumed by the space shuttle program. I can remember the first launch of the Space Shuttle Columbia in April of 1981. I was just finishing up kindergarten, and in the weeks leading up to the launch, we talked about it and prepared for it. To be honest, when Sunday, April 12th, 1981, finally arrived, the shuttle's actual launch was much shorter than I had expected. This spring will mark the 40th anniversary of the launch of the space shuttle. I remember as much about the big deal made in the days leading up to the launch as I do the launch itself.

On Monday morning, August 17th, we officially begin a new school year. In the first week, our teachers will meet with students, explain both what to expect and the expectations for online learning, get the necessary paperwork completed, and make sure students know how to use their technology devices. Some of the assignments students will receive next week will be designed to help prepare students for the weeks to come. These lessons will be designed to build student stamina and get them prepared for academic work. We realize that many of our students haven't completed serious, sustained academic work in many months, and it will take time to get back to where we were in March of last year. Like an injured athlete who hasn't exercised in several months, stamina must be built and maintained. Other lessons will be designed to ensure students have the skills necessary to be successful in an online environment. We will make sure they know how to email their teachers, submit assignments, and engage in live online classes. Next week will be our "Lead Up to Launch." Our goal is to be ready to roll into full online instruction by the beginning of the following week.

We believe that there are some behaviors that we can encourage students to have at home that will help them be more successful in an online environment. We ask that you help us promote these behaviors as well.

## **1. Create a Cadence In The Chaos**

We all need routines to maximize our ability to be successful. Most of us have specific routines that we go through each morning. I get up, shower, shave, and dress for the day before feeding our dogs and having breakfast. I finish up with a quiet moment reading before leaving for work at almost the same time each day. This process brings order and predictability to my day. Our routines stabilize the chaos that surrounds us. I have asked teachers to look at the assignments that they give every week and do their best to set up a cadence to the week to help both students and parents prepare for the weeks ahead. I would ask that you do the same. Help your child set up a schedule for school work that allows them to anticipate the work that will be coming and how they successfully navigate the workload and assignments that they will see each day and each week.

## **2. Everyone Needs A Place**

Everyone needs a place to work. Help your child find a space where they can work each day or afternoon. Having a specific place to do their school work helps set the stage for a successful experience. Some of the students that we have heard who have struggled were trying to work from their beds or the couch while distractions surrounded them. Moving to a space we have reserved for work or school helps trigger our minds to be better prepared for the vital work in front of us.

### **3. *Set the Tone***

Just like the location matters, so does the tone. When I need to work, I often have to separate myself from the distractions of our main living areas. Sometimes, I may find a set of headphones and put them on without playing any music or sound. This way, I can filter out the noise and focus on the task in front of me. In learning about the tone where I get the best work completed, I know that sometimes I need a quiet space to finish the most critical tasks.

### **4. *Dress the Part***

Several years ago, I heard a speaker talk about how she set herself up to be successful at home. Her first encouragement was to dress for work. She said that psychologically there was something profoundly different about the quality of her work when she got up and went through her usual morning routine and dressed for work before beginning her day at the table in her kitchen. She said dressing the part was critical to producing her best work product. On Saturdays, when I get up early to write or work on school work, I have found that going through my morning routine and dressing for the moment really matters. I encourage students to dress for school and prepare themselves for the school work that lies ahead.

As we prepare to launch a new school year, we hope that we can safely have students in our buildings very soon. Know that we will do everything we can to create a safe environment where students can be successful. While we feel the best learning happens when we can conduct face to face instruction, we will do everything we can to help your child grow and be successful regardless of the instructional environment around us. We look forward to this adventure with you that we are about to begin!