BEARWESSENTIALS

Monthly Publication | Dolores School District RE-4A | 970-882-7255

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Order your meals on line Monday through Friday!





On March 11, 2020, Governor Polis gave his first press conference indicating the seriousness of the pandemic and the possible effects on the state of Colorado. Since that date, the

Dolores School District Responds to the COVID19 Pandemic

school district has carefully responded in order to protect students, staff, and parents. As the COVID-19 virus has spread throughout the country and now in our own county, the district has worked diligently to update on a regular basis and set things in order to complete the school year.

On March 18, the governor suspended in-person instruction until April 17. This order came while our staff and students were on spring break. This put an immediate end to any break for administration as they set in motion a plan for our district. By March 23, the administration was meeting and finalizing their plans. The following day the entire school staff had a virtual meeting and laid out the plans. By this time, it was apparent that the likelihood of completing the school year in an online fashion was entirely likely.

At this time, the Colorado Department of Education has waived the minimum number of school days and teacher-pupil instructional hours normally required under state law. Instead, districts must make every effort to provide alternative learning opportunities. Dolores School District RE-4A has chosen to take the learning process viral and utilize the technology in place to partner with parents in completing this school year.

Home of the Bears Continued on page 10

DSD BOARD UPDATES

Staying focused on our mission and vision for the students of DSD

Current School Board

Kay Phelps - President

Term Expires: November 2021

Casey McClellan - Vice President

Term Expires: November 2021

Lenetta Shull - Treasurer

Term Expires: November 2023

Maegan Crowley - Secretary

Term Expires: November 2023

Clay Tallmadge - Director

Term Expires: November 2023 BOCES Representative

While board members should reflect what is heard from the community during board policy discussions, board members can best serve their constituents' immediate needs by telling them whom to contact about their concerns (i.e., the superintendent or administrator who has responsibilities in the area of concern).

Colorado Association of School Board Workbook, 2019

Message From the Board President, Dr. Kay Phelps:

Educators are known for their adaptability and resourcefulness, yet the current crisis does present a daunting challenge. Will we be able to maintain positive attitudes and flexible mindsets? Will our families and students work together with us knowing that the entire world is adjusting to a new reality? Will we adequately meet needs of students while also supporting teachers who may have children and family members at home to care for in addition to making this abrupt shift to a new way of teaching?

On Monday, March 23, I joined a virtual Dolores leadership meeting led by Supt. Richard for department directors and principals to collaboratively tackle the instructional shift. The meeting was surprisingly calm and upbeat. Supt. "Lis" opened with the most recent updates from the governor's office, area superintendents, and the Disease Control Center then each participant contributed information while noting their respective action items for follow up. The planning session was well-orchestrated and professional but what struck me most was that compassion for families and school personnel is the *obvious driver* behind the process, with priority given to the health and well-being of students, families and school personnel.

I'm incredibly grateful to serve this district and Dolores community as a whole. There is no doubt that what's in store will be emotionally taxing and that the foreseeable future holds many unknowns. The school year will not unfold as planned, our guiding document (the strategic plan) will be adapted and amended, our expectations will remain high yet the learning curve for achieving them will be steep. Still, opportunities to learn invaluable lessons about community, family, civic responsibility, public health, and social health will be immense. At this time, and in fact always, modeling resilience may possibly be the single most valuable gift we can give the children we serve – along with compassion of course!

As a keen proponent for collective intelligence, I know in my heart of hearts that we are never as successful alone as we are

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Download our Mobile App for Free!

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Apps by: bluetreeapps

Bear Essentials Newsletter is edited and published from the Dolores School District RE-4A Administrative Office.

Suggestions and comments are welcome. Please email larnett@dolores.k12.co.us.

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District RE-4
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www.dolores.k12.co.us

Information on Assessments

From the Director of Curriculum and Assessment

State Testing

by Alesa Reed

As many of you know, Colorado State tests have been suspended due to the extension in school closure. This includes CMAS, PSAT, and SAT. Dolores School District and the state recognize that SAT tests are an important part of a student's admission process for college. Every effort is being made to collaborate with colleges to ensure student admission to college not be interrupted. Information will be posted on the school website when and if new information is available. NWEA (Northwest Association Educational Association) is the nationally normed assessment DSD administers three times a year to track annual growth. Although not a state test, is also suspended for this spring.

Advanced Placement (AP) instruction and testing will still take place. Our staff will be contacting students who are taking AP classes to deliver instruction and guide them through the process of testing online. There are online supports for student practice and test dates that will be forthcoming. If you would like to have the latest developments on AP testing please contact your student's teacher or the Director of Curriculum and Assessment (areed@dolores.k12.co.us) and they will forward AP correspondence to you during this time.

Our staff is working diligently to provide your student with the best possible education while we navigate this new path. We have been in contact with parents from three different districts and two different states. Dolores, by far, offers the most robust learning platform. We take pride in this knowledge and want to extend admiration to staff and parents for rolling up their sleeves and digging in!

Important Technology Update from the Director

The technology department has been working diligently to ensure students and staff have access to the technology tools necessary to work in this new remote learning environment. I am also working with the secretaries and the registrar to make sure that parent contact information is up to date in our databases. If you are



not receiving emails or auto dialer phone calls from the school district please let us know so that we can update your contact information. Email or call the building secretaries (Secondary Susan Burger sburger@dolores.k12.co.us 970-882-7288, Elementary Erin Schumacher eschumacher@dolores.k12.co.us 970-882-7277) To stay connected please download the Dolores School District mobile app for iPhones or Android phones. Links can be found at the bottom of the doloresschools.org webpage. We send updates and notifications through this app that will alert you through your phone. Also, do visit doloresschools.org for updates and information about distance learning, the counselor's corner, COVID-19 updates, tech tools, and student Chromebook support.

If a student Chromebook needs to be repaired, you may exchange the Dolores School District issued Chromebook for a replacement. Please bring the damaged/non functioning Chromebook to the District Office (100 N 6th Street, Dolores CO) on Tuesdays or Thursdays between 3pm and 5pm. You will drop off the damaged Chromebook and receive a functional Chromebook on the spot with minimal social contact.

We understand that not all families have internet access at home. The Dolores School District's WiFi signal is available to student Chromebooks outside any of our buildings in town, the main campus, the preschool, and the district office. There are also several businesses in town including the library that are providing open WiFi hotspots. Please contact your teacher(s) in the event that internet connectivity issues are preventing you from doing your school work. They will work with you and provide some alternate materials.

Thank you to the Dolores community for being understanding and flexible as we navigate this new system.

Sincerely,

Mark Baxter Technology Director Please refer to the website for more details

www.doloresschools.org

Continued: Message from Board President

together. But there's more. In times of crisis we are never as resilient alone as we are together. Collective resilience will be key at this time, not only for our local community but for our global community. I thank you all for your patience and willingness to adapt.

"Persistence and resilience only come from having been given the chance to work through difficult problems."

Gever Tulley



Provided by Elisa Olson, MA, LPHA Dolores Secondary Counselor

Coronavirus Anxiety: Coping with Stress, Fear, and Uncertainty

Fears about COVID-19 can take an emotional toll. But you're not powerless. These tips can help you get through this stressful time.

Understanding your anxiety

It's a frightening time. We're in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, with cities and even entire countries shutting down. Some of our friends and family are in areas that have already been affected by coronavirus. You may be bracing for what may come. And all of us are watching the headlines and wondering, "What is going to happen next?"

For many people, the uncertainty surrounding coronavirus is the hardest thing to handle. We don't know how exactly we'll be impacted or how bad things might get. And that makes it all too easy to catastrophize and spiral out into overwhelming dread and panic. But there are many things you can do—even in the face of this unique crisis—to manage your anxiety and fears.

Stay informed—but don't obsessively check the news

It's vital to stay informed, particularly about what's happening in our community, so you can follow advised

safety precautions and do your part to slow the spread of coronavirus. But there's a lot of misinformation going around, as well as sensationalistic coverage that only feeds into fear. It's important to be discerning about what you read and watch.

- >Stick to trustworthy sources such as the CDC, the World Health Organization, and your local public health authorities.
- Limit how often you check for updates. Constant monitoring of news and social media feeds can quickly turn compulsive and counterproductive—fueling anxiety rather than easing it. The limit is different for everyone, so pay attention to how you're feeling and adjust accordingly.
- >Step away from media if you start feeling overwhelmed. If anxiety is an ongoing issue, consider limiting your media consumption to a specific time frame and time of day (i.e. thirty minutes each evening at 6 pm).
- Ask someone reliable to share important updates. If you'd feel better avoiding media entirely, ask someone you trust to pass along any major updates you need to know about. Be careful what you share. Do your best to verify information before passing it on "Snopes." Coronavirus Collection is one place to start. We all need to do our part to avoid spreading rumors and creating unnecessary panic.

When you feel yourself getting caught up in fear of what might happen, try to shift your focus to things you can control. For example, you can't control how severe the coronavirus outbreak is in your town, but you can take steps to reduce your own personal risk (and the risk you'll unknowingly spread it to others), such as:

- >Washing your hands frequently (for at least 20 seconds) with soap and water or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- >Avoiding touching your face (particularly your eyes, nose, and mouth).
- >Staying home as much as possible, even if you don't feel sick.
- Avoiding crowds and gatherings of 10 or more people.
- >Avoiding all non-essential shopping and travel.
- >Keeping 6 feet of distance between yourself and others when out.
- >Getting plenty of sleep (which helps support your immune system).
- >Following all recommendations from health authorities.

Continued from previous page

Plan for what you can

It's natural to be concerned about what may happen if your workplace closes, knowing that your child or children have to stay home from school for remote learning, you or someone you love gets sick, or you have to self-quarantine. While these situations can be scary to think about, being proactive can help relieve at least some of the anxiety.

- Make a list of all the possible solutions you can think of. Try not to get too hung up on "perfect" options. Include whatever comes to mind that could help you get by.
- >Focus on concrete things you can problem solve or change, rather than circumstances beyond your control.
- >After you've evaluated your options, draw up a plan of action. When you're done, set it aside and resist the urge to go back to it until you need it or your circumstances significantly change.

How to stop "what-ifs" from spiraling

Relinquishing our desire for certainty and control is easier said than done. If you feel yourself start to spin out into negativity or panic, grounding yourself in the present moment can stop the negative spiral and allow your rational brain to come back online.

The technique is simple yet effective: Bring your attention to your breath and your body. Focus all of your attention on the here and now: noticing the sights, sounds, and smells around you and what you're feeling in your body. Continue to breathe slowly in and out—gently bringing your mind back to your body and breath every time it drifts—until you feel more calm.

Stay connected—even when physically isolated

Evidence shows that many people with coronavirus—particularly young, seemingly healthy people—don't have symptoms but can still spread the virus. That's why the biggest thing that most people can do right now to make a positive difference is to practice social distancing.

But social distancing comes with its own risks. Humans are social animals. We're hardwired for connection. Isolation and loneliness can exacerbate anxiety and depression, and even impact our physical health. That's why it's important to stay connected as best we can and

reach out for support when we need it, even as we cut back on in-person socializing.

Make it a priority to stay in touch with friends and family. If you tend to withdraw when depressed or anxious, think about scheduling regular phone, chat, or Skype, Zoom or Google Hangout dates to counteract that tendency. While in-person visits are limited, substitute video chatting if you're able. Face-to-face contact is like a "vitamin" for your mental health, reducing your risk of depression and helping ease stress and anxiety.

Take care of your body and spirit

This is an extraordinarily trying time, and all the tried-and-true stress management strategies apply, such as eating healthy meals, getting plenty of sleep, and meditating. Beyond that, here are some tips for practicing self-care in the face of the unique disruptions caused by the coronavirus.

- >Be kind to yourself. Go easy on yourself if you're experiencing more depression or anxiety than usual. You're not alone in your struggles.
- > Maintain a routine as best you can. Even if you're stuck at home, try to stick to your regular sleep, school, meal, or work schedule. This can help you maintain a sense of normalcy.
- > Take time out for activities you enjoy. Read a good book, watch a comedy, play a fun board or video game, make something—whether it's a new recipe, a craft, or a piece of art. It doesn't matter what you do, as long as it takes you out of your worries.
- >Get out in nature. Sunshine and fresh air will do you good. Even a walk around your neighborhood or by the river can make you feel better. Just be sure to avoid crowds, and keep your distance from people you encounter.
- > Find ways to exercise. Staying active will help you release anxiety, relieve stress, and manage your mood. You can cycle, hike, or walk. Or if you're stuck at home, look online for exercise videos you can follow. There are many things you can do even without equipment, such as yoga and exercises that use your own bodyweight.
- > Avoid self-medicating. Be careful that you're not using alcohol or other substances to deal with anxiety or depression. If you tend to overdo it in the best of times, it may be a good idea to avoid for now. #



Monthly Blog by Superintendent Lis Richard

It is very interesting to me that so many are calling this experience "homeschooling." I recently read an excellent article by a blogger named Heather Anne. Her blogs are entitled, *Art and Soul*. She writes that we are not homeschooling but CRISIS schooling. There is a huge difference between the two.

This may hit closer to home for me due to the fact that three of my grown children actually homeschool. It is something that works for their families. These parents are quite educated (licensed teacher, registered nurse, and business owner) and yet they work hard at homeschooling. *True* homeschoolers are also struggling through this process of staying at home. They are accustomed to networks of support through co-ops, field trips, chess clubs, sporting activities, music lessons, guest speakers, and so much more. Parents who homeschool correctly, keep their students busy experiencing the world around them and what they may contribute to their communities.

Parents need to remember that all children are grieving right now for their friends and comfort of "normal." They are feeling disconnected and a sense of loss. As parents, you can help meet these tremendous needs. There are some great ideas on our website and all over the internet to help you create that missing connection with your own children.

I encourage you to take this time to really get to know your children. What? Am I insinuating that you do not know your child? Well, there are always aspect of our children we are less familiar. There have been hilarious posts on Facebook and Instagram about parents emailing and contacting teachers with comments about never really knowing their child. Many of the parents are humorously apologizing to teachers for their children. No worries, teachers take these with a grain of salt; however there is some truth to learning about the individual(s) who is growing and maturing before your eyes.

If a parent merely asks their child questions, parents will most likely get little to no response. Create safe spaces to engage. Think outside of your box and start an activity It's okay and even necessary to be REAL with yourself about what's actually happening. A bomb did not go off, but metaphorically it did. Our lives will never be the same after this. If you crumble, honor that. I promise you, your child will learn. We learn from all of life!

that involves the family unit. During this time engage in conversation that enables you to listen to your child.

Take the opportunity to let your child lead this time of learning. Take them for hikes and explore the ground, bugs, trees, bodies of water, skies, and so much more. It is *not* just to walk or hike, it is to learn. Take the content the teachers provide and move it to a brand new level. You can make it amazing and life changing.

This literal "blip" of time is a gift. It is a gift of time to build relationships with those in our home. For me, it is challenging *not* to have children at home. Our 19-year-old grandson is living with us now and last night we finished a 1,000-piece puzzle. To be honest, I do not like puzzles! I looked beyond myself and worked side-by-side with my husband and grandson to finish a cool project. This morning, our grandson could not stop talking about it! It was a lasting memory for him.

It's okay and even necessary to be REAL with yourself about what's actually happening. A bomb did not go off, but metaphorically it did. Our lives will never be the same after this. If you crumble, honor that. I promise you, your child will learn. We learn from all of life! (Anne, 2020)

Passionately Partnering,

Mrs. Lis Richard
Superintendent



LITTLE BEAR Updates

Dolores Elementary School



Thank you so much to all of the families that came last week to gather supplies for their children. It was so great to see you all! We miss our families and can't wait to get started connecting and learning online. Our teachers have been busy this week developing a plan of

instruction and developing engaging ways to interact with their students. By this time, teachers should have contacted all of their students.

Our special education department (ESS) has been coordinating with our area BOCES to formulate a plan on how to serve our ESS population. They will continue to hold meetings virtually and will be contacting you with more information.

We have been working on getting AR (Accelerated Reader) so that students can access taking quizzes and earn points. Many of the stories in their reading books as well as the novels teachers sent home have AR quizzes. It is our hope to have this feature available by April 6.

I wanted to let you know that if you need something from the school like a book or a power cord for your Chromebook, please don't hesitate to contact me. We can make an appointment for picking up key items that you may need. If you were unable to gather materials and supplies, please call 882-4688 ext. 3010 and leave a message. The message will be forwarded to me and I will be in contact with you soon. You may also email me at

khowerton@dolores.k12.co.us. Next week, I will continue to send out *The Galloping Goose* in order to provide you updates.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Howerton, Elementary Principal

ROUTINE, ROUTINE, ROUTINE

by Amanda Hill

Since the closure of school, I have been researching and reading many articles on how best to support my kids with online learning as well as being able to get my work accomplished. To make this transition successful for all, setting routines and a flexible schedule will help all of us feel a little more normal. I have found that these four components will be very helpful to me in setting our routines and schedules.

The first key component in setting a routine and schedule is to remember that online learning provides much more flexibility than a traditional school day. With my own children, I am setting a schedule that I will follow for one week and if it is not working, then I will make adjustments. That is the beauty in the flexibility. I can also set the schedule that I know works best for them and that matches their individual learning styles.

The second key component is incorporating my child's interests into their schedule. Starting with a subject that they really enjoy will help motivate them to get started each day. If they have a subject or assignment that is not as engaging or not their favorite, I will consider putting that after a break or a meal in the middle of day. Online learning will be very different. They will have their assignments and will be able to put them in whatever order they want. They will surely enjoy the ownership and control of this part of their schedule although, they will still need some guidance of course!

The third key component to building a routine and schedule is making time for enjoyable hobbies. My kids are usually very busy during the traditional school year with extra curricular activities like sports and dance. With these activities canceled right now we have time in our daily schedule to explore other hobbies that they may have. I have found they are

Continued from previous page

enjoying learning how to crochet. This is something that I can pass down to them from my grandma and a great way for me to connect with my kids. Something else they love to do is create "science experiments" of their own. Now that we have the flexibility in our schedule, I will be sure to incorporate their hobbies at least once a week.

The fourth key component is making sure to schedule in breaks, playtime, and meals. With the flexible schedule my kids will have more time for outdoor and indoor play. While we are all at home we can even schedule family walks outside, family game time during the day, and sharing a favorite book together. For me, this may also be when I schedule my work time for when they are playing outside or inside with each other.

Setting routines (wake-up time, brushing teeth, meals, and bedtime) along with a schedule will ensure that my family feels a little bit more like normal. Sitting down together and planning each section or their work and play time along with my work time will help us all adjust to our new routines. Lastly, I want to stress that online learning will not and does not mean that my children will be sitting in front of the computer for 7 hours a day. There is great flexibility in getting assignments done. We could even complete two days worth or work in one day if we want to spend more time on hobbies or if I have more work to do on a certain day.

This will be an adventure, but I can always see the positive in the situation and know that the teachers are working extremely hard to provide the best online education experience for my children and all children. I am going to take this time and adventure to reconnect with my family while setting up a great working schedule for them and myself as well. 🖫

STAY HOME COLORADO

MARCH 26 - APRIL 11*

OPEN:

- · Grocery stores
- Banks
- Pharmacies
- · Bars and restaurants (takeout and delivery only)
- Gas stations
- · Liquor stores
- News organizations
- Post offices
- Cannabis stores
- · Police stations
- Fire stations.
- · Hospitals, clinics and healthcare operations
- Garbage/sanitation
- Public benefits (i.e. SNAP, Medicaid) hotlines
- · Pet supply stores and veterinary services

CLOSED**:

- Malls
- Entertainment and sports venues
- Gyms
- Dance studios
- Barbershops
- · Hair and nail salons
- Spas
- Tattoo parlors
- Movie theaters
- Amusement parks
- Arcades • Bowling alleys
- Museums
- Campgrounds Community pools
- Skate parks
- Playgrounds

Disinfecting the **Facilities**

Alfonso Goad, Facilities Director

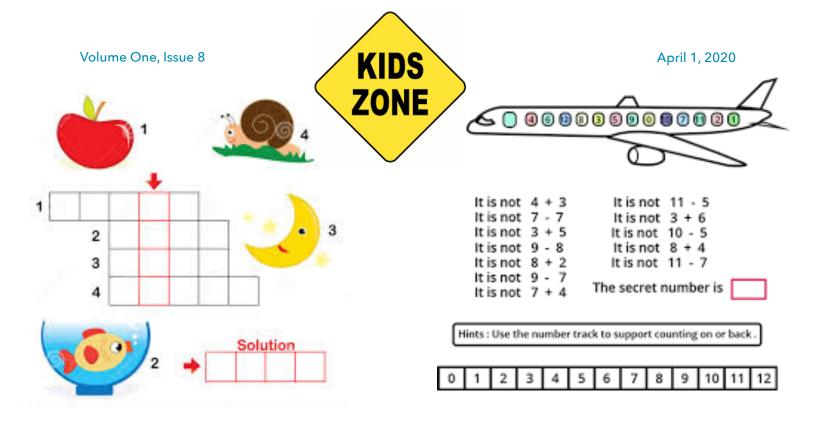
In these uncertain times. I would like to assure the community that the Dolores School District maintenance staff is doing everything in our power to assure the safety of our students, staff, and community. The maintenance staff is conducting very deep cleaning and disinfecting of all our facilities. We have some new tools in our arsenal to help with the sanitation of our facilities. We are also following the guidelines that the state of Colorado has put in place.

Some of our daily tasks include spraying all hard surfaces with an electrostatic sprayer which eliminates 99.99 percent of all bacteria and viruses. Please feel free to contact Alfonso Goad director of maintenance if you have any questions or concerns.

agoad@dolores.k12.co.us









Can you color me? When you finish, show me to your class online!



Continued from page 1

Online Learning

The first day of online instruction began March 30. It was not without challenge as many of the prepared sites did not open for the students. This sent an immediate wave of panic first thing in the morning. The Chrome books are set up with certain limitation and restrictions. These had to be adjusted for the students to access information. The teachers also learned to download information in a different format in order for the students to access this. Most of the issues were resolved within the first couple of hours of online instruction.

The district expects that students will work on the daily content. When this happens in each home will be different and impossible for teachers to control; however, the teachers are able to view how much time is spent in their virtual classroom. There will be work that the students will do on their own and submit to the teacher via email or through the classroom portal.

Technological Assistance

Students have access to their lessons through Google Classroom. This is accessed through their Google Drive located on the main virtual "desktop" on the Chrome book. Once they log into the Google Classroom, they will see messages from their teachers.

Teachers are responsible to post live sessions and assignments for their students. They are also keeping virtual office hours to provide online personal support.

Should any students have repair issues or technology issues, there will be a way to access our technology director online. Please refer to the website at www.doloresschools.org This will take one to the home page where the links are located across the top right under the COVID-19 updates.

Meal Service

March 30 also noted the beginning of our mobile meal service. Any individual living within our district Home of the Bears

boundaries may order meals through the website. All meals can be picked up at 10:30 a.m. The pick up will only last 30 minutes. Meals are served Monday-Friday. The three pick up sites are as follows:

- Curbside Pickup at the District This will be outside
 of the secondary school. There will be food service
 personnel stationed outside of the building ready
 to hand a breakfast and lunch to someone in the
 car. Please do not get out of the vehicle. Our
 workers will come to you.
- Elk's Lodge Parking Lot The same process will take place in this parking lot. The food will be brought to each vehicle.
- Montelores Baptist Church parking lot This location is at 18735 CR 23.5, just off of Highway 184 across from Narraguinnep Reservoir.

District Access

Due to the Governor's Stay-at Home order on March 25, the district buildings are not accessible to anyone with the exception of food service and maintenance employees. These employees are labeled under "essential personnel" qualifications. District administrators may also enter the buildings to tend to the needs of students in order to access learning. The district buildings are closed until the Stay-at-Home order is lifted by the Governor.

Even though the buildings are closed, the district is very much open in a virtual manner. All administrators are online all day and teachers have posted online hours. All phone numbers are going to extensions via voice mail. This means that you may leave a message and it is delivered to the appropriate person. We are answering calls throughout the day (Monday - Friday).

District Activities

All activities including athletics are on hold until the orders (which are law) are lifted. This has been an extremely difficult issue to handle with our students. We have seniors who are depending on activities and athletics to play a part in scholarships for which they are applying. As soon as more information is available, it will be properly disseminated.

Please watch the website: www.doloresschools.org

Attention Senior Citizens

We are continuing to expand our scope of aid to our community by offering meals to our seniors in Dolores.

Elderly citizens are able and encouraged to request a shelf stable breakfast and/or lunch through our school website the same as our students do.

www.doloresschools.org

We know that quarantine conditions are difficult at the best of times and we want to provide this option to as many households that we can. Please take advantage of this service by making your requests a week at a time if necessary.

Want to get involved?

Some of our students need academic support. If you are a volunteer or paraprofessional at school who has gone through a background check, you may contact the principals and let them know you are willing to help. This would specifically be for online tutoring and support.





Employment:

Dolores School District is seeking an elementary special education teacher for 2020-21. This person must have the required certification. If interested, please call 970-882-7255.

Dolores School District is accepting applications for a librarian for next year. Please see the website for additional information.

Bus Drivers Needed for Next Year: Training is available. If interested, please call 970-882-7255.

Substitute Teachers Needed: If interested, please call 970-882-7255.

Dolores Schools are seeking a music and choir teacher. Please see the website for more information or call 970-882-7255.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Booster Club is seeking volunteers for concessions and other activities. For more information contact: Leah Boyd 970-759-5597, Brenda Spurlock 970-739-1925, Laurel Schafer 970-318-1341 or Shelly Purkat 970-759-3101.

PTA - Do you want to be involved in your child's education and provide support to the school? Call the elementary school office for more information.