**A close up of a tree

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**Java with Jeff FAQ – 2020-2021 School Year**

**You asked, he answered! Here are your questions, answered by Principal McGowan.**

**Q: Would you mind sharing a bit about yourself and your road to principal?**

A: I’d be happy to! I was born and raised in Spokane, WA. My degrees are from University of Idaho and Western Washington University. My first teaching job was in South Kitsap school district in Port Orchard. That’s also where I met my wife. From there, I went to Kellogg Middle School in Shoreline. I then became an Assistant Principal at Skyline. Then I became an Assistant Principal at PCMS. Finally, I became Principal at PCMS. This begins my second year in that role.

**Q: Who was your first concert, and favorite musical artist?**

A: Bruce Springsteen, Born to Run concert. I’m a huge Bruce fan!

**Q: How did the first week of school go?**

A: Overall, I think it went really well. Not surprisingly, we hit a few bumps along the way. Some things were out of anyone’s control in terms of tech issues. But overall, it went really well.

**Q: What are the most important skills students can learn from Remote Learning?**

A: The skill to be adaptable is an important one. Being able to roll with some things that are unexpected and letting go of some of the things you can’t control. And learning to think outside of the box and be creative looking for solutions.

**Q: Will 504 plans be implemented during remote learning?**

Yes, they will be implemented. We are thankful to have our paraprofessionals able to participate in classrooms to provide additional support. Teachers also know what support students need. Accommodations will be given. If the situation is different due to being remote, we may have to figure out the best way to deliver those accommodations, but we will provide that support.

**Q: What will a typical class look like?**

A: Looking at it from a teacher’s perspective, I refer to the different sections of a typical class as “I do,” “You do,” and “We do.” After attendance is taken, there will typically be 20 to 30 minutes of direct instruction (“I do.”) Then the students will be able to work in groups or on their own for 45 to 60 minutes with a break (“You do.”) Everyone will come back together for the last 30 minutes (“We do.”) During that time, students can ask questions and the teachers can check for understanding. Students will rarely be on Zoom for that full two hours. Periods 1, 2, and 3 will meet on Mondays and Thursdays; Periods 4, 5, and 6 will meet on Tuesdays and Fridays, and the Social and Emotional Learning class will meet on Wednesdays.

**Q: What should I do if I have an issue hearing the teacher?**

A: Your first stop should almost always be the teacher. Reach out. Is it a tech issue? Try to work it out with the teacher. We are all learning, and we may have to make some tweaks as we go.

**Q: How will teachers be evaluated this year?**

A: Those conversations are happening at the District. When I know, I will share that with all of you.

**Q: If students physically go back to school, what will happen with busses?**

A: Once we get to a point where we are no longer remote learning, our priority will be to bring students back safely. We’ll work through this and share the information when we have it.

**Q: When should we be contacting the assistant principals?**

A: For most issues, the first stop is with the teacher. Start by reaching out to them. If next steps are needed, reach out to the grade-specific Assistant Principal. I (Principal Jeff McGowan) will be responsible for 6th grade; Casey Stookey for 7th; and Kathryn Coffin for 8th.

**Q: What do your days look like?**

A: Busy. During the first week of school, I was making sure everyone was online and where they needed to be. I was working on textbook distribution and figuring out some of those systems. Mostly I am checking in with teachers and students and making sure we’re off to a successful start especially with all the new tech. Your kids are probably the experts. I want to make sure our use of Canvas and Zoom are solid. I’ll continue to be available for questions. I’m focused on making sure you all have the information you need to make it a successful year.

**Q: How do you determine what material to cover during remote learning?**

A: The District has outlined essential learnings. That helps us frame things. But we need open lines of communication. Please reach out if there is a problem.

**Q: Are teachers reviewing breakout room recordings**

A: I don’t know if they are reviewing the recordings, but they are certainly monitoring the breakout rooms. It’s similar to having kids working in small groups out in the hall or in a corner of the room. Teachers will check in periodically. We’ve shared with students that there is a written record of all chats. For the most part, chats are only available for communicating with the teacher.

**Q: Is there a way to disable private chat in Zoom?**

A: Yes. By default, private chat is disabled. A teacher may choose to enable students to chat with each other in breakout rooms, but that would be a deliberate choice.

**Q: What are the advantages of breakout rooms?**

A: We realized the need for students to interact with each other. I probably underestimated that. The breakout rooms help with that. If the student doesn’t want to share with the whole group, they may be more apt to share with a small group. It’s also a nice way for teachers to provide small group instruction if needed. I expect we’ll learn more ways to take advantage of them as we go.