Remote Learning in the Helena Public Schools
March 17, 2020

Parents and Families of our Helena Public Schools,

Welcome to remote learning in the Helena Public Schools. Over the past few days, our educators have begun exploring ways to 1) remain connected to their students throughout this closure and 2) provide an academic connection between the learning environment of our classrooms and each child's current home environment. This will look vastly different by grade level or even content area but, while "remote," our aim is to remain connected, learning and engaged. Below is a starter-set of information including basics, directions and resources. More information will be provided as this develops in the coming days.

The Basics:
Remote learning is designed to be an extension of your child's classroom. While nothing can replace the value of classroom interaction, connectivity and learning can and should continue despite our current closure. This will be a work in progress as you can expect developments over the coming days and weeks. For starters, there are a few basic tools that our students may need.

The Helena Public Schools utilize the Microsoft 365 Office Suite including Word, Outlook (HSD email), and Teams. Please expect that the initial and/or primary contact from your child's teacher will come via email. The initial email may come directly to you as the parent/guardian especially for elementary age students. Otherwise, every student has a Microsoft Outlook email associated with the Helena Public Schools that they should be checking for updates. Teachers will be reaching out to establish contact and provide initial information and resources.

Timeline:
The Helena Public Schools are planning to utilize remote learning for the duration of this closure. As of now, the closure of all public schools in Montana has been ordered through Friday, March 27th. Remote learning will be active beginning this Thursday, March 19th through Friday, March 27th. Spring Break for the Helena Public Schools takes place Monday, March 30th through Friday, April 3rd. Remote learning will not be active during our week of Spring Break. Should public schools be open in Montana, our next regular, in-person day of school will be Monday, April 6th. However, should our closure continue, remote learning would begin again on Monday, April 6th.

Login Information:
Students may need to access a number of resources associated with remote learning including the above-mentioned Microsoft 365 Office Suite and our single login site for resources, Clever. Attached to this letter are specific login directions for the Microsoft 365 Office Suite, Clever and specifically, Microsoft Teams.

Daily Schedule:
There is no designated daily schedule as a remote learning environment offers students significantly more autonomy than the classroom setting. That noted, we suggest that parents and children discuss a schedule and daily expectations for academic work, reading, writing, etc. Again, this will vary significantly by age as some grade levels or content areas may provide more content/assignments than others. In the end, we aim to bridge our current physical divide by staying connected socially and academically across this time of school closure.

Sample Schedule:			
7:00	BREAKFAST	12:30	OUTDOOR PLAY
7:30	FREE PLAY	1:30	LEARNING ACTIVITIES
8:30	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	3:00	COOKING & SNACK
10:00	SNACK	4:00	GAMES & PUZZLES
10:30	CRAFTS	4:30	FREE PLAY
11:00	MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES	5:30	DINNER
11:30	STORY TIME	6:00	FREE PLAY & TECH TIME
12:00	LUNCH	7:30	BEDTIME ROUTINE

The internet is full of example daily schedules posted by behavioral specialists, educators, parents, etc. The table above is simply one example, specific to younger age children, pertaining to how these closure related weekdays could be structured.

Participation and Expectations:
Participation and expectations will vary by grade level and content area. Teachers may provide anticipated due dates for assignments. Yet, plenty of grace will be provided in order to be mindful of this ongoing crisis. In alignment with the above schedule section, students should expect 1) regular contact from their teacher/teachers and 2) regular academic content as an extension of their classroom. If healthy, students should be managing a mix of short (daily) and long-range (weekly) responsibilities as applicable by age/grade level.

Throughout this closure, please be mindful that our teachers may be dealing with illness or caring for loved ones. Should an instance occur where your child's teacher has been offline or out-of-touch for several days, please send that teacher an email. Please also look for updates from your child's principal pertaining to the accessibility of their teachers should an emergency situation arise.

Non-HSD Online Resources:
As our world and nation navigate closures associated with the COVID-19 Coronavirus, a phenomenal number of free, online resources are being developed and offered. From story time with well known authors to multimedia giants providing free content, online learning resources have been significantly boosted due to school closures. While impressive, navigating all of these resources can be challenging. Thankfully, several centralized sources have been developed that include an impressive array of links to free programs and resources (including suggested ages and content areas). Please check out The Amazing Educational Resources spreadsheet for one particularly comprehensive example.

Internet, Data and Wi-Fi Services:
Several companies have begun offering services to assist with this ongoing crisis. Below are just a few who have made offers associated with Wi-Fi Internet.
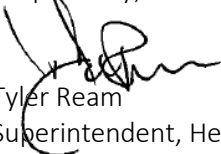
> Charter Communications is offering free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi access for 60 days to households with K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a Spectrum broadband subscription and at any service level up to 100 Mbps. To enroll call 1-844-488-8395. Installation fees will be waived for new student households. This is just one of many thoughtful and helpful ways our community and nation can pull together in support of one another during this challenging time.

> AT&T home internet and wireless customers will be able to utilize unlimited internet data over the next 60 days. Additionally, AT&T will continue to offer internet access for qualifying limited income households at $10 a month through the Access from AT&T program.

> Verizon customers experiencing hardships because of COVID-19 will have any late fees or service terminations suspended for at least the next 60 days

In closing, thank you for your willingness to collectively explore remote learning as a district. While nothing can replace the authentic interaction of a classroom, I am confident in our educators as their willingness and energy have been inspirational across these last two days. On behalf of the Helena Public Schools, thank you again for your time and support.
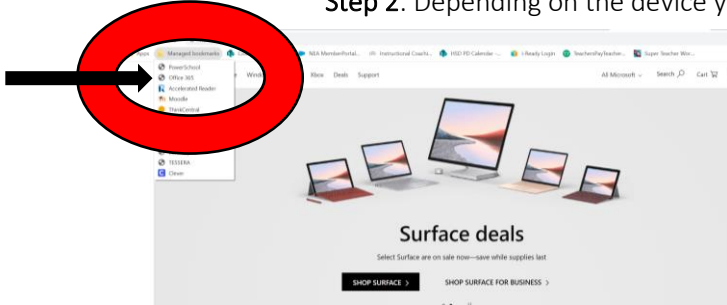
Respectfully,

Tyler Ream
Superintendent, Helena Public Schools

Below are the steps to access your students' Helena Public Schools Outlook account.

Step 1. Log into the device you will be using click on the appropriate browser (Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, or Mozilla Firefox).

**Step 2**. Depending on the device you are using there are two options:

On non-district devices → Go to http://office365.helenaschools.org/.

On district devices → Look for *managed bookmarks*, top left under the address bar. Click this and select Office 365 from the drop down menu

Both options will bring you to the Sign in screen as shown on Step 3.

Step 3. The screen shown below is the Helena Public School's Organization Sign In page. Students will log on using your first initial and last name @ helenastudent.org. The password is your student ID number. *If your student is unsure of this number, you can check on PowerSchool for the ID number or email the classroom teacher.*
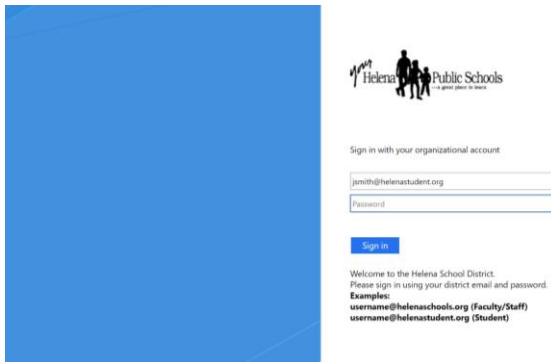
For example: Jane Smith as a student is jsmith@helenastudent.org, then the password is a six digit ID number. After entered, click SIGN IN

Step 4. The next screen may show differently depending on whether or not you have logged-in prior. If you have logged-in prior, you will be taken to the Step 8 screen
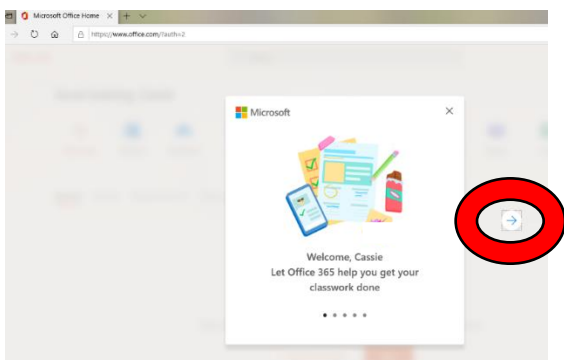
First time logging-in: The initial welcome screen will show if the account has never been accessed. If so, you will have five screens of information to click through. Use the arrow on the left to progress through these screens.

Step 5. After the informative slides, you will get a landing page shown below. Click on Outlook. This will take you to a page and options to set-up the account will be presented.
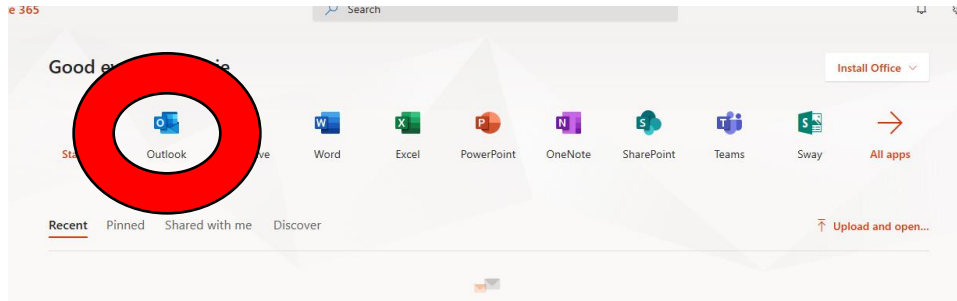

Step 6. Two screens of customizable options are presented after this. Click on the arrow- the first option is time and date. The second screen is options for themes.
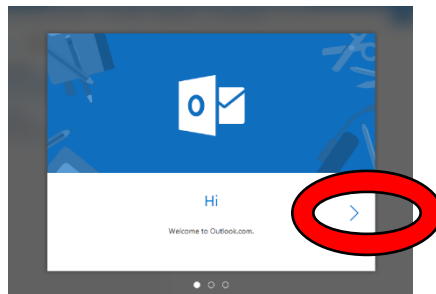
Step 7. Once you have completed the customization screens, you will see the Get Started Screen below. Click on GET STARTED to complete the set up process.
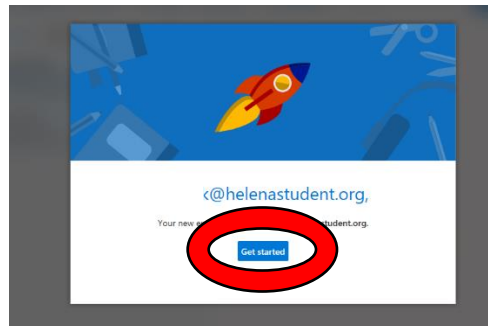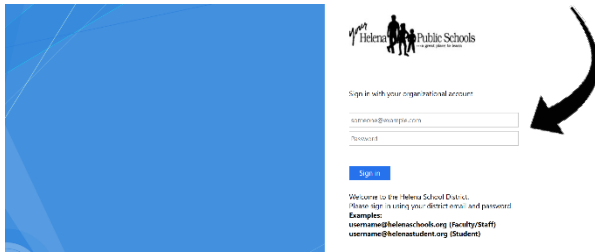

Step 8. You are ready to go! From this screen, you will be able to access your email, calendar, etc.
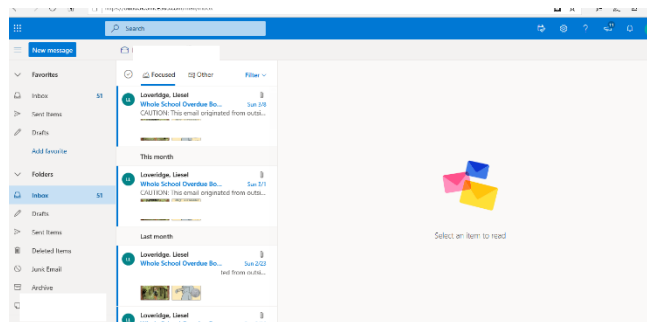
Sign-in to Teams
1. Initiate Teams.
   o From outside the district (off-campus) click here

   o In Windows, click **Start** ⊞ > **Microsoft Teams**.
   o On Mac, go to the **Applications** folder and click **Microsoft Teams**.
   o On mobile, tap the **Teams** icon.
2. Sign in with your HSD username and password (same as your Office 365 login information)

Pick a Team and Start Exploring
A *team* is a collection of people (like your class or the name of your teacher), a thread of conversations, files, and/or tools

A *channel* is a discussion within a team. For students, a team is likely a specific class

The best way to get familiar with teams and channels is to pick a relevant team (class) and start exploring!

1. Select Teams ⚇ on the left menu bar and then select an appropriate, related team.
2. Explore the conversational posts related to your team (class) posted by your teacher or other students in your class.
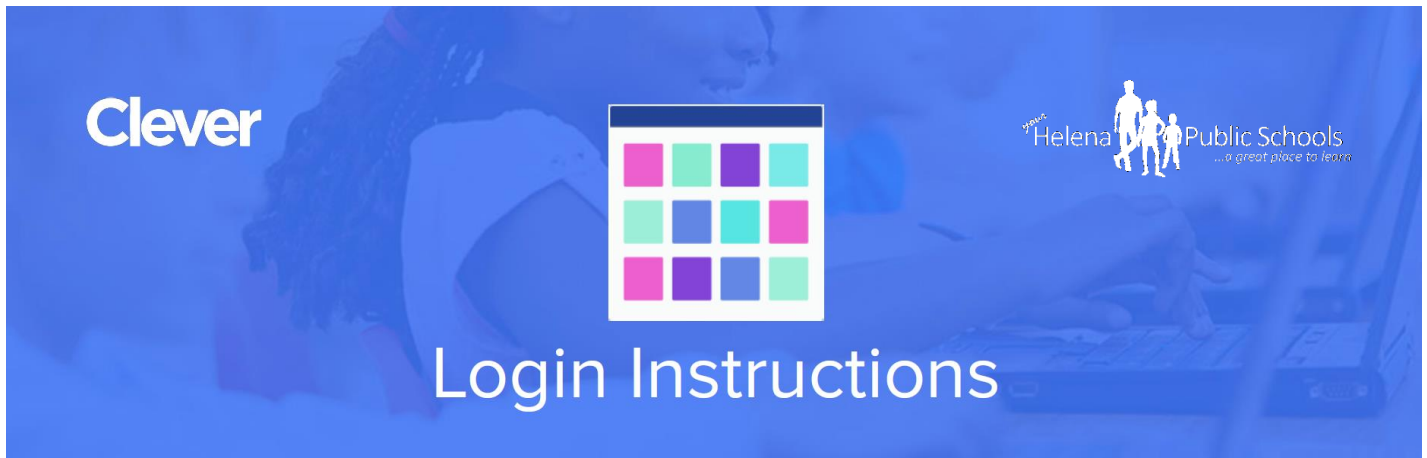
Assignments, Files and Calendars
You can also select "Calendar" on the left menu bar to view a scheduled appointment.

The "Assignments" tab provides information and due dates related to assignments.

The "files" tab includes resources posted by your teacher.

Login Instructions
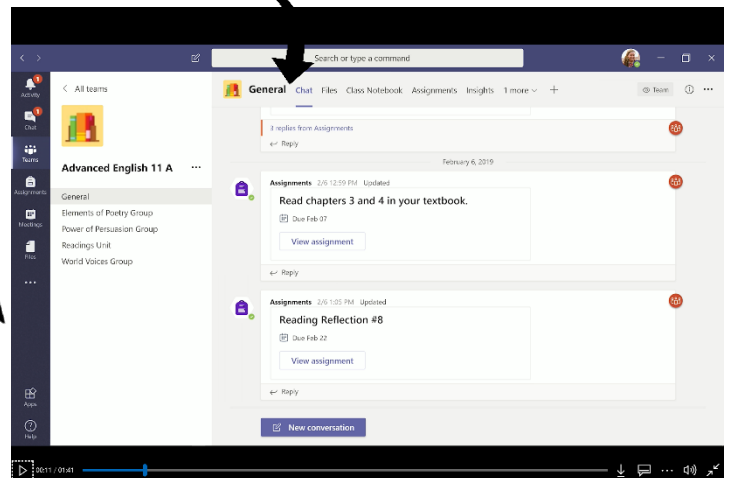
The Helena Public Schools utilize Clever as a single login portal that allows our students to connect with academic content and resources from afar. New resources are being added daily and are often associated with either 1) specific learning content or 2) daily, supplementary programs that students can utilize for sharpening their skills.

Step One: Open this link to the Clever login

https://clever.com/in/helenaschools
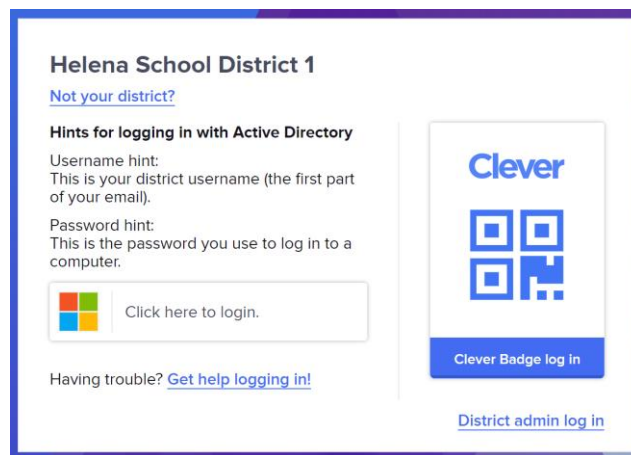
Step Two: Login with your Clever Username and Password

Username Hint: This is your first initial and your entire last name (example: John Smith is jsmith)

Password Hint: This is the password you use to login to any/all Helena Public School computers

Step Three: Find your teacher's page and/or browse school/district content

Note: Some linked resources may require additional login while others are already rostered with Clever and will not require anything additional