

The Bullet TODAY

★★★ Bolivar County's Daily Source for Community News ★★★

Virtual Learning In West Bolivar Consolidated School District

By Nancy Armstrong, *The Bolivar Bullet*



SAYIN' IT ONLINE: Due to the Coronavirus, many schools across the Delta are teaching in a virtual setting.

Covid 19 has disrupted all levels of society in many different ways. One of the biggest changes brought upon by the virus has been on the school system. Following an abrupt end to the 2019-2020 school year, students are now in the process of returning to their classrooms and

The Bullet TODAY



finding many major changes awaiting them. Students in West Bolivar Consolidated School District are returning not to a physical, but a virtual classroom. As a result, teachers are being trained extensively in how to produce the greatest results using the latest in educational technology.

On Sept. 8, students in grades K-6 will log into their virtual classroom from the safety of their own homes. The school district has worked to ensure every student has been provided with a laptop computer and internet access. With the high demand for student computers and the unavailability of internet services in the remote MS Delta, this has been no easy feat. While there are certainly sure to be some glitches, the IT department feels confident every student will soon be able to learn online.

Teachers have labored extensively preparing online classrooms which will be both fun and engaging for the students. When the students log on, they will be greeted each day by an avatar which is a cartoon version of their teachers. The "teachers" can be found in a wide range of "classrooms." Some are somewhat silly and wacky while others are sleek and sophisticated. Yet, they are all very inviting to the students.

Promptly at 8:00 a.m., attendance is taken and instruction begins. There is a schedule which is followed to ensure all subjects are being properly taught. Teachers then are able to use a wide variety of tools in order to maximize their instruction. The teacher will be able to teach lessons live as well as employing the latest in technology. In these virtual classrooms, almost everything found in the room is interactive. For example, a book found on the teacher's bookshelf will provide a link where the student is able to actually read the book. Students can click on flashcards and they will be able to practice math facts. The alphabet chart on the wall provides multiple learning opportunities. Students can click on a letter and will be able to watch a video about what sounds the letters make or actually practice writing the

The Bullet TODAY



letter. Students can click on interactive globes which will then provide a geography lesson. The virtual classroom is designed by the teacher to make learning fun while still being able to monitor the students progress. Programming has even enabled teachers to be able to view their students' computer screens in order to guarantee they are on task. The online classrooms are in no way just putting the students on a computer game or reading them a book over zoom. Instruction is individualized and students and teachers are being held accountable.

The advances made in technology just over the summer are truly amazing. Even after the pandemic is over and students have returned to the physical classroom, education is never going to be the same. This new technology will only complement the teacher's traditional instruction. The pandemic is forever going to be remembered for being one of the darkest times in our history but it has forced many positive and much needed changes upon the world of education. West Bolivar Consolidated Middle School is emerging as a leader and role model in making these changes.