

**March 20, 2020**  
**Parent/Guardian Conference Calls**  
**9:00am and 2:00 pm**

**Continuity of Learning:**

1. Will the students who are presently participating with the daily online activities, and saving their work in google classroom/google docs receive any credit for that work?

**Teachers have been looking at student work prior to school closure. Starting the week of March 30th, teachers will be providing feedback on work submitted via SeeSaw or Google Classroom. We will be looking at more formal assessments of student work in the following weeks.**

2. Will all this online work really account for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year?

**Yes, these are considered school days and thoughtful work is being done to provide students with engaging lessons. Lessons will be aligned to the curriculum. We realize online learning is not a substitute for direct instruction, but districts have been directed by the state to institute Continuity of Learning plans.**

3. Please have the teachers remember not every child has access to a printer.

**The district recognizes printer access may be an issue for families. The Continuity of Learning will provide lesson planning that will not require printing. We are looking at the possibility of providing a parent pick up of hard copies if that becomes necessary.**

4. Can teachers and guidance counselors help with essays and write letters of recommendation during this distance learning time away?

**Yes, teachers and guidance counselors will serve in this capacity as usual. Parents can email guidance counselors with any questions.**

5. How will students receive feedback on their work and progress?

**Teachers will provide feedback from the online platforms that will be used to post lessons (SeeSaw for grades K-2 and Google Classroom for grades 3-12). Lessons will be posted by 8:00am each day with student expectations and due dates clearly defined. Teachers will be available from 8:00am-3:00pm each day. Students are not required to log on by 8:00am each day, but teachers will be monitoring for student engagement. If teachers see a student has not logged on, the teacher will contact the guidance counselor and school administration and one of these staff members will reach out to parents. Parents should expect responses to their emails within 24 hours.**

6. Will assessments of any type be administered online?

**For the first week (March 30<sup>th</sup>) teacher feedback to lessons, writing assignments, etc. will be in the form of feedback via the online platform. The following week, which will begin Phase II of the Continuity of Learning plans, will include grading of assignments. The roll-out of these plans will be consistent district-wide as we want to ensure continuity in instruction.**

7. Is learning going to be live streamed or recorded? Self-paced or group guided?

**Right now, lessons will be posted via SeeSaw or Google Classroom. As the weeks evolve, recorded videos and/or live classrooms may be incorporated. Google Hangout would be the platform used and is part of the long-term plan. We want to make sure we have consistent instructional practices occurring and are mindful not to do too much too fast. We also want to make sure all teachers are comfortable as this is a new way of teaching for all teachers.**

8. Many districts have put time frame requirements around online learning. Will learning times be flexible enough for us to be involved or so restrictive that its only between certain daytime hours?

**Teachers are required to be available from 8:00am to 3:00pm each day. Students do not need to log on by 8:00am and lessons do not have to be done in the order of their schedule, so there is a lot of flexibility for students.**

9. What is truly the expectation for children to gain new skills during this period?

**Teachers will be monitoring student work for growth and providing feedback.**

10. What is the “attendance” requirement if a student becomes ill and cannot participate for a period of time?

**We will not be taking formal attendance, but teachers will be monitoring student engagement online. Following the initial week, we will be reviewing our ability to take attendance during distance learning.**

11. Please explain what the plan is for the closing day of the semester and grades. Will it be extended? Will students have an opportunity to make up any work they missed due to absences just prior to the closing of the school due to Covid-19 so that their semester grades are not affected?

**Individual schools are looking at their quarters/semesters, and they will be determining whether or not quarters need to be extended.**

12. Will parents have the option to have their child repeat the current grade?

**The administration has not had any conversations about this as Continuity of Learning is being provided to students. This would have to be done on a case-by-case basis and from guidance from the state.**

13. Will Karen Carpenter-Snow continue teaching the fifth grade class or will a substitute teacher be teaching that class?

**Ms. Carpenter-Snow will continue to teach that class and provide the lessons however, she will also have administrative duties to handle, so other highly qualified staff, like curriculum coaches and interventionists, will be assisting her.**

14. Will there be supports provided to parents to help their children with online learning?

**Resources for parents will be posted on the district website, which will include academic and social emotional resources.**

15. At the lower grades, how are concepts going to be taught? Will teachers record a lesson for students to watch?

**Elementary teachers will create lessons that will include videos for literacy instruction.**

16. When will the current eighth graders' next year's schedules be completed?

**This work began in January and work on students' schedules will continue as planned. Families will receive their students' schedules for next year later this spring/summer.**

17. What can parents do to stimulate students who are bored?

**Try to keep them socially connected as much as possible. The district is providing some additional resources online for students to work on until the Continuity of Learning begins.**

18. Are the interim packets being graded?

**No. Feedback on learning and work will begin when our Continuity of Learning measures begin the week of March 30th.**

19. What is the status of AP tests? AP tests are typically mandatory; can students opt out?

**AP tests will now be administered online and will only cover material through mid-March. Students can opt out of taking the test. Please speak with the AP teacher and counselor before making any decisions.**

20. How will hands-on or lab work be done with the online platform?

**Teachers are going to provide instruction to the greatest extent possible, but hands-on and lab work will not be provided. If we return to school before the end of the school year, it may be possible to compact the curriculum to provide some of those experiences.**

21. What is the status of state assessments?

**All state assessments have been postponed for this year.**

22. For Agriscience students who live in another town, what guidance do you give families whose home districts do not start back to school at the same time as Suffield?

**Your child will follow the Suffield schedule. It is anticipated school districts will be back in session at the same time.**

23. What is the status of spring athletics?

**CIAC has not canceled spring sports to-date. If school closure is extended it will impact spring sports. Districts will follow CIAC rulings.**

24. Will the workload for students be lightened somewhat?

**We are cognizant of making sure students are continuing with learning, but not being overwhelmed. Building administrators are monitoring the online learning being offered. Please reach out to social workers and guidance counselors with any concerns.**

25. As lessons plans are being created, will they allow for independent and collaborative work?

**Yes, lesson plans will allow for both.**

26. Can students get their band instruments that are at school?

**We are currently minimizing any staff members in the buildings. We will evaluate whether it is feasible to arrange for students to have access to their instruments.**

27. Is there consideration for the teachers who are now home with their own children and working as well? Also are there any additional resources for students to get extra assistance, for instance students on 504 plans?

**We do recognize that teachers are home with their families as well and we need to handle all this with flexibility. The high school is looking at offering the Wildcat time. Teachers are aware of the accommodations of 504 students and those will carry over to these lessons as well. Please reach out to school counselors with any questions or concerns.**

28. It is my understanding that SATs are not occurring as scheduled. Will parents be getting an update on what 11th graders need to be doing instead of SAT prep?

**SAT tests are postponed. Counselors will give guidance to students and continue to update as new information becomes available.**

29. Will counselors be available to send items that colleges will be requesting?

**Yes, counselors will be assuming their same responsibilities as if school was in session.**

## **Special Education:**

1. How do you plan on handling special education (IEPs)?

**Special Education programming will be provided to the greatest extent possible. Districts are following guidance set forth by the State Dept. of Ed and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Special education teams will collaborate with general education teachers to coordinate specialized instruction, ensure accommodations and modifications are made, create individualized learning plans, determine how the student will access the learning plan and how they will receive related services. Teachers will communicate the learning plan to parents and provide ongoing communication and feedback. Parents who have specific questions about their special education child's programming should email their child's Special Education teacher, case manager, building Special Education Supervisor or the Director of Special Services.**

2. How will services like PT, OT, and Speech for special education students be handled?

**Related service providers will coordinate with one another and the family to provide these services to the greatest extent possible. Parents who have specific questions about their child's special education programming can email their child's Special Education teacher, case manager, building Special Education Supervisor or the Director of Special Services.**

3. How will transition planning be handled for students moving from one school to another at the end of this school year who have IEPs or 504s?

**The Special Education department is waiting for additional guidance from the State Department of Education in regards to holding PPT and 504 meetings. Once we receive updated guidance this information will be shared with families.**

What suggestions can you provide for parents on how to support special education students who cannot do the work on their own?

**Service providers will be collaborating and communicating with parents on a regular basis with strategies to assist students who require additional assistance in accessing the lessons and the learning plan.**

5. How are special education students who are in private placements being supported?

**Most private placements are developing continuation of learning plans to these students in coordination with the District and families.**

## Technology:

1. What is the plan for students with no (or limited) internet access?

**Becky Osleger has sent out a communication to families regarding access to free internet and hotspots. She will work with families who do not have internet access to get them access. If anyone knows of a family who does not have internet access, please email the technology help desk at [IThelp@suffield.org](mailto:IThelp@suffield.org). This email should also be used for any families needing technical assistance with their student's district issued devices. A technology resource page is currently being created and will be on the district website.**

2. Do families with a student in kindergarten or first grade need a Chromebook if another child in the family has their school device?

**At this point, one device should be fine; however, elementary administration and Becky Osleger are looking at the inventory to eventually possibly provide devices to students in Kindergarten and First Grade. In the near future, there may also be federal funding to support distance learning.**

3. Can students use their personal computers or other devices for online learning?

**Yes**

4. Can blocked educational sites students are trying to access be unblocked?

**Send requests through the technology help desk ([IThelp@suffield.org](mailto:IThelp@suffield.org)). The staff will look at the site and unblock appropriate sites. Also, the state has not waived the student data privacy requirements, so districts cannot allow sites that we don't have a signed privacy agreement with. This would apply to sites that collect student data.**

5. If I did not take advantage of picking up my grade 2-5 students Chromebook, but would like it now, how do I go about getting it?

**Contact your school's Principal and they will make the necessary arrangements.**

6. How do I get my student's Google account login?

**Parents can contact their child's building principal to reset passwords if unknown; however, teachers will be including student account login information with their welcome letters.**

## Operational:

1. I am concerned for our hourly employees, like our paraprofessionals, lunch room personnel, and bus drivers. If we will not be returning to regular classrooms this year, will they continue to be compensated? (I hope yes as they are vital members of our school community too!)

**All staff are getting paid, as all of our staff are a part of the Continuity of Learning Plans. Bus drivers are employees of M & J, so the district does not have control over whether they are getting paid. The administration continues to identify where paraeducators, academic support and other support staff can fit into the online learning program. Many of these employees have expressed that they will help in whatever capacity is needed, and we want the different bargaining groups to understand this work will be beyond the scope of their collective bargaining agreements.**

2. Is there any consideration in having school this summer? This would assist those who are not able to work right now to stay home so we will not have to pay for summer camps and babysitter?

**The Distance Learning days are counting as school days. Without knowing the length of closure at this point, the timing of having a program in place is a big factor as well as budget implications.**

3. What is the projected length of closure?

**While we have been directed by the state to remain closed through March 31, there is every indication that this will be a prolonged closure, perhaps eight weeks or longer. The Superintendent will communicate with families once more information is provided from the state.**

4. If it is a long-term closure, will students be required to retake the year? (i.e. not advance a grade level)

**No, these days are counting as school days. We realize online learning cannot replace direct instruction, so we may need to collapse the curriculum going forward to make sure units of study are completed.**

5. Is a plan in place if school closures go into the following school year?

**Everything being done is evolving based on the latest information and guidance. District administration has begun planning if this were to happen and we will continue to monitor this.**

6. Is there any consideration to reimburse parents for after-school enrichment program fees?

**Yes, the Business Office is working on this.**

7. Will the district still be having April vacation and what is the last day of school?

**Distance Learning days count as school days, and the Commissioner of Education has directed districts to honor the last day of school on districts' school calendars, so the last day of school is June 18. There are a specific number of days that are within the teachers'**

**Collective Bargaining Agreement, and since these days count as school days, we will not be making any change to the April vacation schedule.**

8. Will these conference calls be recorded and posted on the website?

**These meetings will not be recorded; however, the Q & A portion will be posted on the website.**

9. When will evaluations for incoming kindergarten students be rescheduled?

**All screenings and evaluations are postponed at this point and depending on when school reopens, will determine when these can be rescheduled. The schedule will be communicated to families as soon as we know.**

10. Will parents get money back from Disney trip?

**Bill Hoff has been working with the travel agency and is hopeful, at the minimum, families will receive vouchers.**

11. Reported cases in Suffield?

**As of the date of this conference call (March 20), there are no confirmed cases, but that is expected to change at any time.**

12. Quebec trip? Any decision? Reimbursement?

**A final decision has not yet been made, but will within the next week. Families will be notified of the decision.**

13. Can parents receive an email summarizing what was discussed today and links to the supports being provided online.

**Parent resources, student resources, and distance learning will all be posted on the Parent & Student Resource page on our website. The Q & A will also be posted there.**

14. Will we be notified is COVID-19 case in Suffield?

**We are receiving information from the local health district and the Department of Public Health. If we are told of a confirmed case, the individual's privacy rights are of utmost importance. We will share all information that we are allowed to share.**

15. If school doesn't reopen, can some summer events be planned so students can have closure.

**All upcoming events are pending at this point, but we are still hopeful that we can hold these events. We will be flexible and creative in trying to provide something for seniors in the event schools do not reopen.**

16. Have there been any discussions with regards to the graduation ceremony?

**No decisions have been made at this point about graduation.**