



PARKLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Educating For Success, Inspiring Excellence.

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ParklandSchoolDistrict



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Dear Parkland Families,

My hope is this letter finds you and your family in good health. I wish to thank you for being patient and supportive these past two weeks as we implemented continuous learning activities for our 9,500 students. We recognize that this is a difficult time period for many of our families as we all navigate social distancing, business and school closures and the associated challenges of COVID-19. In the midst of crisis, we have come together as a community to digest the unthinkable ramifications of a global pandemic and support each other during this unprecedented event. My communication to you today is a proposal to ask you to partner with us in trying to help our children return to a sense of routine and normalcy in the midst of the chaos that is surrounding us.

Governor Wolf announced on March 23, 2020, that Pennsylvania Public Schools will remain closed through April 6, 2020. School is then scheduled to open for staff to prepare schools and classrooms and subsequently receive children on April 9, 2020, but due to the effort to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus, this might not be possible. As a result, beginning on March 30, 2020, all Parkland students will begin **required e-Learning education**, where learning continues through a series of structured activities that are teacher directed, student implemented and assessed for progress. This correspondence includes the guidelines and schedules we will utilize to implement this educational plan.

In alignment with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's guidance for continuity of education, Parkland has been preparing staff to deliver our educational program in an online format. Our plan is to transition from what we are currently doing, which has been offering non-mandatory learning activities, to planned instruction. This will include required engagement and formal teaching that is similar to what occurs in a classroom setting while students learn new concepts that are aligned to grade level standards. **In order to receive grades and credit, students must engage regularly and complete the course requirements. Attendance will be taken and each day will count as a regular school day. We will start this new Parkland e-Learning Program on Monday, March 30, 2020.**

As our administrators, educators and students begin this initiative on Monday, we ask for your support. We know that there will be some bumps as we transition our instructional delivery means and methods and we ask for your patience and flexibility. That is to be expected with any new initiative, even when we have had many months to prepare, let alone only two weeks!

We are confident in our plan and in our educators' abilities to communicate with your children virtually, but this is a change in how we "do school." The past two weeks allowed our educators to try some activities in an e-Learning platform but going forward, their assignments will become mandatory. Along the way, the District will support all staff with tools, resources, and workshops designed to enhance teaching and learning during the school closure period.

e-Learning will require your support from home as well, and we thank you in advance for your help and patience. We know that many of you may also be working from home, or that your circumstances may be changing in a variety of ways, and we recognize that this will not be easy for anyone. There will be challenges and we all must be willing to be flexible and adapt to a rapidly changing environment. However, we all want this to work in order to continue to keep everyone healthy and to continue to deliver the best possible education to the children in Parkland. We are proud of the work that we do and our ability as a community and District to work together in times of need. There is no greater time to teach our children how to share, be patient, work on time management skills and problem solve. Admittedly, this is easier said than done, especially with our little ones.

We envision Monday, March, 30, to look and feel like the first day of school in a new venue. Initially, online instruction may feel a little uncomfortable as our teachers and students settle into a new routine, but it will be done with the best intentions for all Parkland children. We are committed to continuity of learning and specific interventions for **every** student. **Our mission is to focus on learning for all students.** It will not come without challenges, but it will be filled with care. There will be a learning curve, but it will get easier over time. Please be patient with your child's teacher and other school personnel. I have the utmost confidence that they will be doing their absolute best to help foster learning in this new setting.

The next two weeks, March 30- April 10, will be used to orient everyone to the new Parkland e-Learning format. The initial goal is for your student to feel connected and engaged. Some new learning may take place, and completion/effort grades only will occur. Teachers will provide a lot of feedback, so students understand expectations and get used to the online environment. Our goal is to remain flexible during this critical time as we know that the stress and anxiety regarding the pandemic and all of its domino effects are affecting Parkland families in many different ways.

Structure At Home

This will cause a change for your household and no change comes without hurdles. **It will be extremely important to establish structure and routine in the upcoming weeks.** Structured learning will contribute toward attaining some routine and normalcy for your child. We know how hard it is to maintain a sense of discipline when schedules change. Therefore, it will be important to establish that structure as soon as possible. Some guidelines that we recommend include:

- Identify a space, such as a dining room table, that could become the study space. It is beneficial to make this space different from a bedroom or other location with distractions.
- Develop a structured schedule for school work (e.g., 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.). This structure will begin to form a routine.

- Eliminate other distractions, such as cell phones and television, from the environment.
- **Take a few moments to help your child get a feel for the “week’s worth” of assignments. This is a new skill. Students are not used to looking at a large batch of learning activities at one time and then developing a plan to tackle bite-sized chunks. This is an important life skill and will get easier.**
- Ensure some “brain breaks” and exercise opportunities within the work times. The balance of mind and body will be especially important given the stress and anxiety of this global pandemic.
- Reinforce the importance of consistency in sleep patterns. We want to avoid “summer mode” when some students stay up very late and then “sleep until noon.”
- Reach out with questions. We want students and parents to ask for help or direction if they need it. All Parkland teachers and staff are available via email during the school day. The directory with contact information for Parkland staff is here: <https://www.parklandsd.org/schools/staff-directory>

Our Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development team, along with the Technology and Student Services Departments, have worked alongside the Building Principals to develop the plans for this transition. Please click below to read through and familiarize yourself with Parkland’s e-Learning Plan:

[Parkland Elementary, Middle and High School e-Learning Plan](#)

We will continue to send updates as we embark on our new journey, the Parkland e-Learning Plan. Please continue to monitor your email for the most up-to-date information and visit www.parklandsd.org/coronavirus for a list of previous communications and additional resources.

Together we will make this work.

Sincerely,



Richard T. Sniscak
Superintendent of Schools