
3-27-20 Elementary Update

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Dear Westport Families,

We are pleased to share more information about the new elementary distance learning plan that goes into effect on Monday, March 30. Modifications are based on a combination of best practices in distance learning and practical suggestions from teachers, administrators, and parents. The primary goal of the new plan is to ensure important learning outcomes are achieved in a learning environment that promotes regular and substantive interactions between teachers and students.

As we continue our transition from face-to-face schooling to online learning, our goal is not to replicate traditional educational practices, but rather focus on what we want students to know and be able to do - and then design online activities and tasks that are engaging and meaningful. This is most effectively accomplished by incorporating a balance and blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences. Synchronous experiences occur when students and teachers are working together and interacting in real time. Asynchronous experiences transpire when teachers post instructional activities online and students complete work at their own pace.

The framework for this at the elementary level is as follows:

- Google Classroom will be the primary platform for creating, distributing, and grading assignments
- Daily reading, writing, math block (includes word work in k-2; word work embedded in writing 3-5)
 - Daily read aloud - these may be prerecorded or live.
 - Approximately two hours (including read aloud)
- Specials teachers post Google Classroom assignments on days they would regularly meet with a given class
- Science (two 30-min lessons or one 60-min lesson per week) posted by science teachers; will be posted at the start of the week
- Flex Block (90 minutes)
 - Some support Services may occur at this time
 - Individual Check-ins/Small Group work may occur during this time
 - Independent Projects/opportunity for students to self direct learning using resources available in the “[General Resources](#)” of the [K-5 At Home Learning Site](#) or other resources determined by the family
- Each student will receive a live check-in at least once a week from the homeroom teacher: either small group or individual.
- Teachers will begin incorporating live social interactions with their classes. Live social interactions with the whole class may include, but not be limited to, Morning Meeting or a virtual lunch experience

Student Schedule (sample)

Morning meeting/message/RULER – 30 minutes per day

Academic Blocks - math & literacy - 120 minutes per day

Specials/Science - 60 minutes per day

Lunch - 30 minutes per day

Flex Block - Small Group/Individual Check-Ins/Independent Projects/Self Directed Learning and Other Family Resources or Projects’ – 90 minutes per day

This structure provides more interactive experiences for students and also allows for a continued evolution of our programming as teachers become more familiar and comfortable with teaching in a new medium. Monday will not be perfect, but it will be an improvement that will continue to evolve. Additional information about this plan can be found at the following webpage <https://sites.google.com/westportps.org/wps-distance-learning-phase-ii/home>

There will be times teachers may be using group video conferencing. Students video images and names may be visible. To protect student privacy, parents are encouraged to have their children participate via a location that is quiet and free of distraction. Other individuals in the home are not permitted to participate in or be visible on the video conference, or otherwise observe the lesson, other than reasonable adult supervision of the student. Parents and students are prohibited from recording video conferencing sessions.

In this unprecedented time, it is essential that we all commit to working together to provide our children with impactful educational opportunities and a sense of wellbeing.

Sincerely,

Anthony Buono, Assistant Superintendent
Debra Dunn, Principal Long Lots Elementary School
Beth Messler, Principal Saugatuck Elementary School
Kevin Cazzetta, Principal Greens Farms Elementary School
Lou DiBella, Principal Kings Highway Elementary School
Janna Sirowich, Principal Coleytown Elementary School

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