



Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen

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Constance D. Evelyn, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

April 22, 2020

Dear Valley Stream Thirteen Families,

Thank you for your support during these extraordinary times. We value your partnership during this extended school closure and your recognition of the many challenges we are all experiencing as we adapt to our changing world. As is part of life, everyone comes to the table with a variety of expectations for how things should be. Right now, there is a great continuum of experiences within our community. We hope that many are safe and healthy at home during this time, however, it would be unrealistic to think that there is no suffering happening within our community due to the circumstances at hand. Our challenges are many, however, we will continue to make every effort to meet the diverse needs of all.

Continuity of Instruction – Learn at Home

As a district, we have undergone significant change over the past month. Our instructional planning has been in response to the best information we had at the time decisions were made. We have continued to adapt our instruction throughout this extended school closure and we will persist in our review of the instructional services prioritizing our students' education and well-being.

Beginning with the week of April 27th, your child's teacher will be providing a more structured and interactive response within our **Learn at Home** program. We will continue our weekly learning packages, with the addition of higher levels of interactivity with our teachers. Classroom teachers will provide a weekly schedule to ensure that parents know when to expect interaction with the teacher. The schedule and weekly learning package will include:

- Teacher office hours, 30 minutes per day for student questions; as needed during regular school hours at parent's request (office hours can include email, phone, google classroom, remind, class dojo)
- Teacher contact hours for parents, 30 minutes twice per week at a set time; as needed during regular school hours at parent's request
- A minimum of two sessions per week live interaction with students as a check-in with your child's teacher
- A minimum of two ELA and two Math, live or recorded instruction weekly (total of four teacher created or live). This may be with the classroom teacher or by another grade level teacher; these sessions may be another segment of the two live check-in meetings or they may be stand-alone as part of the weekly learning package.
- In addition, teachers may also provide commercially made videos to support instruction, such as BrainPop, Khan Academy, etc.

Please regard live sessions as the equivalent of your child being in her/his actual classroom. Therefore, we ask that students enter these sessions following the established classroom rules. We also ask parents to ensure that your child is prepared for these sessions and has a place at home that is free from external noise and distraction. Also, please note that screenshots of teachers, filming or recording teachers is a violation of our computer acceptable use policy and privacy rights.

Parents as Partners

During this extended school closure, it is important that parents, to the extent possible for each family, become partners in instruction with the school district. There is no one size fits all model, nor is there a single plan for remote instruction that will work for everyone. In order to provide students with instruction at home, parents become a critical member of the instructional team. Teachers are here to support you and have been instructed to keep parent needs in mind while planning their weekly learning packages. Here are some statements that may assist you with remote learning:

- Even with live and/or recorded video, students may struggle to understand new learning. It's okay if your child doesn't understand. You can keep short notes about how your child is responding to remote learning and share those with your child's teacher.
- Parents of younger children are encouraged to assist your child with reading assignments that are part of the weekly learning package. It's okay to read it to them or to use a screen reader.
- Parents can monitor the time children are spending on the assignments or screen time. It is okay to limit time spent so that children are not experiencing frustration.
- We encourage parents to prioritize the ELA and Math assignments, and then move to Science or Social Studies. As of April 27th, we will be limiting the weekly learning package for grades K-3 to only one of these two subjects per week.
- If your child is completing all of the weekly assignments and you want them to do more you can utilize the supplemental resource packet for your child's grade or you can explore skills on IXL.com, in all four subject areas: ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies

Student Assessment

An important part of the instructional process is assessment for and of learning. The district administrative team has carefully considered how to best continue this aspect of our *Learn at Home* program.

We have identified the following statements as guiding practice for grading during remote learning:

- Teachers will include prior knowledge of students to determine the most appropriate report card grade for the third marking period.
- Teachers will recognize the unique circumstances of individual students during the pandemic and use discretion regarding determining final grades where appropriate for individual circumstances.
- Teachers will continue to use their professional expertise to assess submitted work in determining grades. These may include both teacher assigned remote work and online program (IXL, Raz-kids, etc.) work.

- While it is appropriate to limit formal summative assessments (i.e. Chapter or Unit tests) in the remote learning environment, teachers will create opportunities for students to show their learning by increasing informal assessments opportunities such as single-day independent digital activities, student reflections, show what you know videos, and student work samples.
- Participation and effort may compromise a larger portion of your child's assessment this marking period.
- As is typical of any school year in that retention is extremely rare, we do not plan to fail or retain students due to the extended closure of schools. A 'No Grade' designation will be used to ensure that students are not penalized during the extended school closure.

The marking period 3 report cards will be revised as follows:

- All attendance during the extended school closure will default to present
- Classroom teachers will provide only four main grades, ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies, using the Achieved Goals or No Grade designation
- Subject area teachers will not assign grades for Marking Period 3
- Classroom teachers will write objective, descriptive narratives for Marking Period 3 that reflects students' work over the whole year

Performance Level Key (Prior to extended closure)

- 4 – Exceeding Standards
- 3 – Meeting Standards
- 2 – Approaching Standards
- 1 – Below Standards

Performance Level Key (for Marking Period 3: 2019-2020)

- AG – Student has achieved remote learning goals (Achieved Goals)
- NG – Not able to be evaluated at this time (No Grade)

Descriptive Performance Level Key for Remote Learning

Performance assessment is based on child's performance on remote learning work, participation, projects, informal and formal teacher assessments and observations, and effort.

AG – Achieved Goals: Meets or exceeds expectations for grade level remote learning work. Demonstrates knowledge, understands, applies, and extends learned concepts and skills.

- Meets or exceeds district expectations on all remote learning work
- Completes most or all remote learning work related to grade level skills and concepts
- Produces accurate work or revises work as needed
- Uses higher level thinking skills and problem-solving skills
- Exhibits high levels of cognition, e.g. asks questions, work products are creative
- As able, challenges themselves to do more

- As able, consistently engages with remote learning opportunities

NG – No Grade: Unable to participate or does not participate in remote learning work.

- Student is unable to work remotely for any reason
- Remote work is highly inconsistent and/or is unable to be evaluated
- **No Grade** does not indicate that the student has failed

The new performance level key supports our ideals that teaching and learning continue in a robust manner during the extended school closure. This includes the importance of assessment and feedback as part of the learning process. If you have any questions or concerns regarding grading or assessment during the third marking period, please reach out to your child's teacher or to the building principal.

Sincerely,

Constance D. Evelyn

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On Behalf of the Collective Work of Educators in the Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen