

April 3, 2020

Powhatan Families,

I hope that you are all safe and well. Since the Governor announced that schools will be closed for the remainder of the year last week, well over 75 virtual meetings have been held to discuss next steps. Every teacher, administrator, coach, instructional assistant, and specialist has been invited to participate in creating a plan for the remainder of the school year.

Throughout all of those meetings some core beliefs have emerged:

1. Continuity of instruction is important for our students, both now and for future learning. Our students cannot afford to have a six-month gap in their learning.
2. Equity of learning opportunities is vitally important. This continues to be our greatest challenge, but we have devised a personalized plan for students for whom barriers to distance learning exist. Staff will be contacting families to create an individual plan to continue learning.
3. We have kept families at the forefront of our planning. Our goal is to balance essential learning skills and concepts without overburdening families. We understand that this is a time of great stress and pain. We commit to being compassionate and flexible and will take each families' unique situation into account.

Below you will find updates to a wide variety of topics for your review.

CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTION

The instructional team has been working to create a distance learning plan with a focus on preparing students for future learning. We have identified the essential skills and content for each grade and subject area. Our teachers have begun planning activities in grade level and content groups around those essential skills and content for distribution after spring break.

We will begin the continuation of student learning on Tuesday, April 14.

Elementary

Students will receive weekly calendars of learning activities ([a sample template is linked here](#)) from their teachers each Tuesday to be completed by the following Monday via Seesaw . This will provide a consistent time and a single means of communicating the instructional plan for the week from all of your child's teachers. We will be working individually with families who are not able to use Seesaw for this purpose.

The learning activities are being designed with the following timeframes in mind.

- Reading/Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies 15-30 minutes each per day
- Resource 15-30 minutes per week
- 2 hours per day for grades k-2 - not to exceed 10 hours per week
- 2-3 hours per day for grades 3-5 - not to exceed 15 hours per week.

Secondary

Students will receive a weekly overview from their teachers each Tuesday via Schoology to be completed by the following Monday [a sample template is linked here](#). This overview document will be different by level and content area, but will provide a consistent time and means of communicating the instructional plan for the week from each of your child's teachers. We will be working individually with families who are not able to use Schoology for this purpose.

The learning activities are being designed with the following timeframes in mind.

- 2-3 hours of work maximum per week per class
- Maximum of 15 hours per week per student

Students Receiving Special Education Services

During the extended closure, we will provide Special Education services through distance instruction that will take place virtually/online, through video recordings, with paper/pencil materials and other modes. We will make every effort to provide services for students during this time. Teachers will be in contact with parents to discuss individualized plans and updates as needed. Our Special Education team is committed to helping parents and students through this process.

Teachers will be updating assignments in Power Teacher Pro so parents can see student completion and teacher feedback. We also understand that some parents may need additional technical support so we are creating short tutorials for SeeSaw and Schoology.

Finally, if this plan is creating undue hardship on your child or family, please contact your child's teacher(s) or principal and let them know. We will see if we can identify additional supports or make a plan to fill in any gaps when we all return to school.

GRADING AND STUDENT FEEDBACK

Third Quarter Completion

The third nine weeks marking period will be closed out as of March 13th. All students in **grades 6-12** will have the opportunity to make up any missed or outstanding assignments. *All makeup work must be completed prior to May 4th in order to be graded and counted into a student's grade.*

All elementary students' third nine weeks' grades will be closed out as of March 13th and any outstanding assignments will be excused.

Fourth Quarter

Starting on April 14th instructional activities, created by teachers and staff, will be provided and assessed based on effort and completion with a final pass/fail designation. This will enable us to determine that a student has completed a majority of required standards, competencies, and objectives, including those that are essential for success in subsequent coursework.

Teachers and support staff will be using a variety of methods to document students completing work. This includes technology platforms, emails, phone calls, and other methods.

Teachers will also be providing feedback in a variety of ways, including Seesaw (elementary), Schoology (secondary) and Power Teacher Pro to students on the work they complete to facilitate successful learning.

Year End Grade

For yearlong courses an average of MP1, MP2, and MP3 as well as First Semester Exam, if taken, will be used for the final letter/numerical course grade. In addition to the final numerical course grade, students will need to receive a passing grade for the fourth nine weeks in order to pass the course.

Any student failing a course at the end of the third nine weeks will have the opportunity to complete new work during the fourth quarter for a number grade to be averaged with the rest of their term grades in an effort to pass the course.

TECHNOLOGY

In the coming days, families with identified technology needs will be contacted by staff to discuss what options and alternatives may be available to utilize technology for distance learning. If we are unable to identify options or alternatives with technology, we may provide other options, including paper copies, and summer or fall alternatives as needed.

We will also hold help desk hours for students who are experiencing hardware issues with their Chromebook. Help Desk hours are 10am - 2pm at the following locations:

- PMS - Concession Stand (Monday and Wednesday)
- PHS – L100 (Tuesday and Thursday)
- Elementary Schools (Friday)

In addition to Wi-Fi availability outside of PCPS buildings, *all Xfinity Wi-Fi Public Hotspots are now open* to everyone on the “**xfinitywifi**” SSID. Public hotspots can be found in small/medium businesses and outdoors in commercial areas. *Non-Xfinity subscribers need to accept Terms and Conditions to access the network* and repeat when requested to continue to receive free unlimited access. Additional information is available through the **Xfinity Wi-Fi site linked here.**

FOOD DISTRIBUTION FOR STUDENTS

Any student under the age of 18 will be able to pick up meals while schools are closed. These meals are provided free of charge. Students must be present in order to pick up meals. Food will be distributed on the following dates:

- Mondays, April 6, 2020 to May 18, 2020 – 7 days of breakfast and lunch meals.
- Tuesday, May 26, 2020 – 6 days of breakfast and lunch meals.
- Monday, June 1, 2020 – 7 days of breakfast and lunch meals.
- Monday, June 8, 2020 - 5 days of breakfast and lunch meals.

Food will be distributed at the following school locations:

- Powhatan High School - 8:00am to 10:00am. Bus loop at the rear of the school.
- Powhatan Elementary School – 8:00am to 10:00am. Bus loop on the western side of the school.
- Powhatan Middle School - 4:30pm to 7:00pm. Door 11 located on the western side of the school.

Please follow the lead-in signs at each location and drive up to the distribution station and open your trunk. **Children must be with you.** State the number of children you have in your car. Food Service staff members will look to verify the number of children and then place the appropriate number of bags in your trunk. If you are in a pickup truck or other vehicle without a trunk the food may be placed inside the vehicle.

If you are unable to pick up meals during the scheduled times, please contact Sodexo by email foodservice@powhatan.k12.va.us or phone 804-598-5700 extension 123 for an alternate time or delivery method.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

VDOE PARENT GUIDE

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/office/covid-19-parent-guide.shtml

PCPS FAQ

<https://boomi.to/qbtm>

I am extremely proud of all of our staff. I believe they have created an instructional plan that allows students to demonstrate mastery of essential new skills and concepts in an engaging, student-directed manner. The plan was also created to allow students and parents to easily organize and monitor their learning progress through consistent assignment checklists and teacher feedback.

All PCPS facilities will remain closed during the Governor's Stay at Home Order. Please email or call if you have any comments or questions. Voicemail will be checked regularly at all schools and Pocahontas Landmark Center.

I am also thankful for the commitment of our students and parents. I know that the Powhatan community will pull together and look out for one another during this crisis. PCPS is proud to be an important part of our community. Stay safe and be well in mind, body, and spirit.

Dr. Eric L. Jones
Superintendent