



## SPS Remote Learning- Information for Families

During times of crisis, we are all reminded of the importance of community. In Shrewsbury our mission statement makes explicit that we serve our students in partnership with others. We all share a responsibility to care for and support one another during this challenging time. This document was developed for our families, with the goal of providing specific guidance during these unique circumstances.

Shrewsbury's Remote Learning Plan is proposed with three considerations in mind: the Governor's announcement that school closure will be extended to May 4; guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that directs districts to shift from offering optional learning opportunities to facilitating remote learning, and, most importantly, our desire to make a difference for our students during a time when they will benefit from continued connection, additional structure, and increased engagement with learning.

### Goals

**As stated previously, this plan was created to address district priorities, namely:**

- I. Keeping our students connected to educators and classmates in ways that enhance their well-being
- II. Engaging students in distance learning, with a focus on:
  - A. Providing supports to help ALL students learn at home
  - B. Maintaining and developing key academic and critical thinking skills
  - C. Helping students learn important academic content

### Guiding Principles

This is an unprecedented and challenging time. School closure has impacted all our students, staff and families. It's likely that families will struggle to balance competing priorities- and we recognize that our educators may, too. For that reason it's important

to remain grounded in our core values and helpful to recall the [guiding principles](#) for remote learning first shared by Dr. Sawyer on March 27th.

## **From Optional “Learning Opportunities” to Consistent Expectations**

As you know, our initial plan centered on connecting with and engaging students by suggesting learning opportunities. However in the past two weeks we’ve learned several things worth noting:

- Parents sometimes need help navigating which resources are the best match for their child’s needs
- Students are best supported when teachers match learning tasks to students’ needs wherever possible, and
- Children are most likely to persevere when they receive guidance and feedback.

You can expect that our educators will provide specific academic assignments to your children. On the home front, please do your part to encourage their active participation in learning experiences. This is particularly important when it comes to monitoring your child’s online activities.

## **What can we expect from our child’s teacher?**

As you know, when school closures were extended our educators began assigning targeted learning tasks to the students in their classes. This will continue. Moving forward our plan will include weekly “live” interactive experiences with our educators for students and families.

Briefly:

- every educator will interact with students “live” online multiple times each week, including “office hours.” These interactions will vary in nature by level due to the different needs of students at the preschool/elementary, middle, and high school grade spans, and will also vary by educator role.
- Please see detailed guidance regarding “live” interactions for your children in the links that follow at the end of this document.

## **What will “live” Interactions look like?**

These “live” interactions may include a combination of video or audio conference meetings with students, online discussion boards/chats, interactive lessons, office hours, or the provision of various student services, etc., and they will differ by role and

grade level. Educators may utilize different platforms, but our shared goal remains the same: keeping our students engaged and connected as learners in their community.

## What is Remote Learning?

Although we aspire to do all we can to maintain connections between home and school during this period of closure, it's simply not possible to replicate the vibrant nature of a classroom at a distance. Remote learning is not merely online learning; we want our students to experience the richness of diverse learning experiences, including teacher-directed assignments, options to engage with content in multiple modalities, interdisciplinary projects, nature walks and integrated experiences with Art, Music, Media and Physical Education. Just as importantly, we seek to maintain connections with classroom communities and further opportunities for social emotional learning. Finally, choice and enrichment encourage our students to be self-directed. Accordingly, we have structured remote learning plans purposefully to include:

- Pencil and paper practice of academic skills
- Online learning opportunities, and
- Interactive experiences that engage students and connect them to their teacher, other educators and to their classmates for the purpose of reviewing material, applying new skills and learning new concepts aligned with grade level standards

## Shared Responsibilities

Facilitating robust learning experiences for our students is a shared responsibility. Guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) suggests that while schools are closed, educators aspire to meet students academic and social emotional needs, while focusing on delivering approximately 50% of the content students would experience in a typical school day.

We do expect our students to complete assignments, and we encourage full and active participation. For their part, our



educators will provide students feedback on the work they submit, and reach out to students that are not participating.

## Classroom Connections & Content Delivery

Our shared goal will be to foster connections and further student learning with a focus on four objectives, namely:

- revisiting and reinforcing concepts taught before schools closed,
- practicing grade level skills to mastery
- empowering students to pursue their interests across subjects and disciplines, and
- teaching new material.

We cannot possibly replicate school – and we don’t expect to do that. Rather we are planning to engage students in roughly 50% of what students might otherwise have learned during a typical school week.

## Expectations for Student Engagement

As stated previously, educators are expected to assign and provide feedback on student work completed during school closure. At the middle and high school level this exchange will be managed via Schoology and may resemble established assessment practices, including rubrics and letter grades. If your child is experiencing difficulty completing or submitting work, please contact the teacher first.

For planning purposes, it may be helpful to know how much work students should do each day. Any “instruction” teachers do should fit within the proposed time limits below.

Level	Total Student Learning Time Targets per Day (all subjects/courses)
Preschool	1 hour + 15 minutes of physical activity
Grades K-2	1.5 hours, including academics, PE, Art, Music, Health
Grades 3-4	2 hours, including academics, PE, Art, Music, Health
Grades 5-8	2-3 hours, including academics, PE, Art, Music, Health
Grades 9-12	2-4 hours, depending on course load, including Character Strong initiatives

When creating assignments and optional additional learning opportunities, you can expect that our educators will provide supports and scaffolding for students who may have difficulties with an assignment, or provide alternate assignments if appropriate (our special educators will be working to provide these supports for students with IEPs).

For example, ESL Teachers are actively working with colleagues to support English language learners. For translation needs, contact Kathleen Lange-Madden at [klangemadden@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:klangemadden@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us)

Teachers will also plan options for the needs of students who are able to work above grade level expectations and who are ready for more challenging content or assignments. The general resource list found [here](#) remains a good source of “choice” options. **Remember, many powerful learning tasks can be completed offline.**

## Student Services

SPS remains committed to providing a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. Our approach is informed by and consistent with the [United States Department of Education Guidance \(issued March 21, 2020\)](#) as well as state guidance from the [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#).

We are unable to replicate Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in the home environment as they are written for in school implementation. IEP services as written in the service delivery grids are not able to be provided in a remote learning environment. Liaisons, such as special educators and IEP service providers, have been instructed to look to the intent and the goals of each individual IEP and use those to guide their actions in determining how services will be provided in a remote learning environment. DESE has determined that, given the current circumstances, IEP services can be provided in 2 models:

1. Supports and Resources; or
2. Instruction or Services

Liaisons will determine the least restrictive manner in which your child is able to access curriculum content and IEP goal areas. It is important to note that a shift in the way services are provided in a remote learning environment will not impact accepted IEP services upon return to school, unless and until an IEP team comes together to make decisions and propose changes.

For questions or concerns about special education, please contact your child’s liaison or building [Team Chair](#).

## Expectations for Staff Availability

Going forward, educators will manage their schedules to provide students and families in Shrewsbury with “office hours” or times when students and parents can receive timely support through email, discussion boards/chats, virtual meetings, etc. in order to answer questions, provide support, provide feedback, direct or clarify learning assignments

In order to avoid conflicts across our nine schools, district leaders have developed a schedule. The “master schedule” approach was developed to assist families with children that attend multiple schools where “live” interactions may overlap if there is not a coherent approach across the district.

Faculty and staff will be available to students for brief periods at various times throughout the day, as identified in each of the grade span schedules. Note than within each time frame, each grade level will have allocated time blocks for interactivity.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30 - 9:00	Elementary Schools  Office Hours 9-11	Elementary Schools	Elementary Schools	Elementary Schools	Elementary Schools
9:15 - 9:45					
10:00 - 10:30					
10:45 - 11:15					
11:30 - 11:50	Middle Schools Math Grades 7 /8 Grades 5 & 6 ELA & Math	Middle Schools ELA Grades 7/8 Grades 5 & 6 ELA/Math	Middle Schools Office Hours: 5 AA/FL/BCO 7 and 8 Team	Middle Schools Sci Grades 7/8 Grades 5 / 6 Sci/SS	Middle Schools Soc. St. Grades 7 / 8  Grades 5 / 6 Sci/SS
11:50 - 12:10	BCO Grade 7	BCO Grade 8	Office Hours: 6 AA/FL/BCO 7 and 8 Team	Allied Arts Grade 7	Allied Arts Grade 8
12:10 - 12:30	Allied Arts Grade 5	Allied Arts Grade 6	Office Hours : 7 AA/FL/BCO 5 and 6 Team	BCO Grade 5	BCO Grade 6
12:30 - 12:50	Foreign Lang Grade 6	Foreign Lang Grade 7	Office Hours” 8 AA/FL/BCO	Foreign Lang Grade 8	Team Activity

			5 and 6 Team		
12:00 - 12:30	SHS Period 1	SHS Period 5	During this Time: SHS staff will attend meetings for a variety of purposes.	SHS Period 1	SHS Period 5
12:30 - 1:00	SHS Period 2	SHS Period 6		SHS Period 2	SHS Period 6
1:00 - 1:30	SHS Period 3	SHS Period 7		SHS Period 3	SHS Period 7
1:30 - 2:00	SHS Period 4	SHS Office Hours		SHS Period 4	SHS Office Hours

Note: There is some overlap between OMS and SHS in order to accommodate staff shared at the middle level.

The shaded blocks of time indicate when teachers may schedule “live” sessions with their students in real-time. Best practice suggests that online interactions should be limited to 20-30 minutes per session. Please see the individual grade span guidelines at the end of this document for more specifics.

### Expectations for Communication with Educators

Just as students’ lives have been disrupted, so too have the lives of the adults in our school communities. For this reason, maintaining open lines of communication is more important than ever. To the greatest extent possible, our educators will be available to support students, staff, and families. This includes, but is not limited to, teachers, school counselors, nurses, media specialists, adjustment counselors, psychologists, and related service providers.

In a climate of social distancing, educators will be using technology tools to bridge the gap between home and school. Office hours can be accomplished through a variety of formats including video conference, telephone call, email, digital chat, etc. It’s expected that educators, families and students will adhere to the guidelines established by the district, which can be found [here](#).

As we seek ways to interact with students in a “live” format, students will be using a variety of commercial websites and online services. Student use and account creation will be facilitated by the Information Technology Department. More to the point, in adherence with district Acceptable Use policies, as they interact in this new remote learning environment, our educators have the same expectations for student behavior online as they did when school was in session.

Some of the long established guidelines for communication still apply. For example, it's reasonable to expect that during the work week, educators will reply to parent emails within 24 hours whenever possible.

## **Technology**

Some familiar tools in common use across the district include email, Google docs, and Schoology. Increasingly we are embracing new tools to meet new demands, including Seesaw and Zoom. For this reason, engaging students effectively may require an investment of time and energy at home, too. As is the case with any learning, we will all become more adept with practice over time. Both educators and families serve as models of perseverance; the "growth mindset" we encourage with students also applies to ourselves.

## **Technology Support**

Under the direction of Mr. Brian L'Heureux, Director for Information Technology, our technology team has been working tirelessly to maintain our network and to identify and implement the use of new tools in a safe, efficient and timely manner. As you likely know, recently they've also organized to support families by distributing devices to families without a device and setting up parents accounts for families in Kindergarten Grade 1 and Grade 2.

The IT department will be available to support student issues regarding their technology. For support, parents should email [parenttechsupport@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:parenttechsupport@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us) for assistance.

Curriculum teams are actively working on tips for parents, too. Stay tuned!

## **Assessments**

### *Report Cards*

As you know, school closures stopped the clock just as our educators were preparing report cards and progress reports for students and parents at the elementary and middle levels; additionally, the length of the closure will affect grading for all students. For these reasons we have adjusted timelines for issuing report cards at each level as follows:

### Elementary School (Grades K-4)

- Teachers have already begun working on comments for Trimester 2 report cards, and teams will continue to collaborate on progress reports for students with individualized education plans as well.
- Report card grades and comments and IEP progress reports will be issued on April 15, 2020
- Instructions on how to access these online through the PowerSchool Parent Portal will be provided

### Middle School (Grades 5-8)

- Cycle 4 will end on Friday, April 3, and Cycle 5 will begin on Monday, April 6th.
- Report card grades and comments and IEP progress reports will be issued on April 15, 2020
- Instructions on how to access these online through the PowerSchool Parent Portal will be provided

### Shrewsbury High School (Grades 9-12)

- Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 will be merged into one grading term called Semester 2. Current grades will be averaged with make-up assignments and future work to determine a final grade.
- Remote learning assignments for the rest of the school year will be assigned a letter and/or numerical grade. We have decided to utilize this system as it's familiar to students, families and staff. In this way students, parents, and staff are able to track students' progress.
- At the end of Semester 2, all courses will be assigned a grade of Pass or Fail. Scores of 60 or higher will merit a Passing grade. Scores of 59 or less will be considered Failing.
- Semester 2 grades will not affect a student's grade point average (GPA).
- Given the challenges and inequities our students may experience during this time, there will be no final exams.

During the period of school closure teachers will be providing feedback and in some cases grades on assigned work. However, at all levels students will receive a Pass / Fail grade for the final grading period of the year.

### **MCAS**

State assessments are mandated by statute. Jeffrey Riley, the state Commissioner of the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE), has sought authority from both the federal government and the state legislature to waive and/or adjust MCAS this year. While we believe it will be unlikely that MCAS assessments will take

place, at this time no information has been shared publicly. Districts across the state await guidance from DESE.

## **Sickness or Family Need**

Again, we are all experiencing the disruption caused by COVID-19 together. Attending to your own health and well-being is important. To assist families, Noelle Freeman, our Director of Nursing has put together several helpful memos specific to COVID-19. You can find them on the district homepage under the [Coronavirus Information page](#). If you require additional assistance, please contact us at [info@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:info@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us) or 508-841-8400.

## **Level-Specific Details**

*Remote Learning at the Elementary Level can be [found here](#).*

*Remote Learning at the Middle Level can be [found here](#).*

*Remote Learning at the High School Level can be [found here](#).*

## **Resources for Families**

Click here to access a family-friendly [Toolbox](#)