



PINE GROVE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Promoting Growth, Achievement, Success, and Direction for ALL Children!



*Heath W. Renninger
Superintendent*

Hello Cardinals:

April 1, 2020

First, I apologize for the length of this correspondence. It does contain very important information. Please read carefully. We hope you and your family are well and safe and beginning to adjust to the ever-changing developments we are all experiencing each day. While the situation is unprecedented and the times are difficult, they have brought out much kindness and generosity toward those in our educational community. We thank you for your patience, understanding, and support as we are working to shift to flexible, online learning.

When are we going to go back to school, and what days will we be in session?

Since none of us has a crystal ball, we do not know a timeline for physically returning to school beyond the most recent notification that schools will remain closed until further notice.

At this point, we have been granted latitude in the mandatory 180 days of school. We will continue to monitor the situation, follow guidelines provided to us by governmental agencies and determine a finalized school calendar as soon as possible. The last day of school has not been determined at this point.

When will the 3rd M.P. end?

Based on the most recent information from PDE in regards to schools remaining closed until further notice, we will officially close the third marking period on Friday, April 17, 2020. Any student with missing assignments should make contact with your teacher immediately. All report cards will be mailed upon completion.

Now what happens considering the school closure is indefinite?

In an effort to prepare for the extension of a mandated school closure beyond the indefinite closure announced by Governor Wolf, the PGASD Administration has been working to develop, through research and collaboration, an Instructional Continuity Plan for flexible education in the Pine Grove Area School District. Our Instructional Continuity Plan does not fully replicate on-site learning; however, we are confident that our teachers can deliver appropriate teaching and learning opportunities that allow all of our students to grow academically in a flexible environment.

Moving forward teachers will be providing Enrichment and Review for our students. Teachers and staff will be analyzing and reflecting on students' prior learning. Teachers will begin to prepare materials and informal activities to reinforce this prior learning. These materials will typically be shared through an online or flexible format. Teachers and staff will communicate with families and begin evaluating how to meet the needs of our students to the greatest extent possible during this unprecedented time. All students in grades 6-12 should check that you can access your Schoology account. Early next week we will be providing instructions on how to log in as well as a username and password for those in need. Students in grades PreK-5 will need access to the PGASD website, www.pgasd.com, if you can't access the website, please contact your building principal by email or phone.



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During the week of April 6th, teachers will work in online teams for collaborative planning sessions along with faculty meetings with administration to determine the ways in which we can enter the next phase of flexible learning – regular, online, teacher-to-student engagement. Collaboration teams will involve regular and special education teachers as well as specialists and administration where appropriate. In addition to the team and faculty meetings this week, teachers will work individually to set up Schoology, Class Dojo, Google, and other Learning Management Systems to prepare for the technology aspects of flexible learning. This professional development and practice is essential for the successful launch of our plan. Enrichment and Review activities will continue to be offered to our students throughout this period.

Students will continue to receive enrichment and review activities through Schoology for grades 6-12; and the district website for grades PreK-5. Again, if you are having difficulty accessing Schoology or the website, please contact your building principal by email or phone.

On Tuesday, April 14th, our Instructional Continuity Plan (released separately) *will officially commence*. Teachers will begin connecting with students directly as indicated in the ICP plan. The intention is for the Instructional Continuity Plan to strike a balance between providing grade-level appropriate activities/assignments so that our students can make progress on outcomes, while at the same time, keeping the expectations reasonable so that students have a high chance for success.

Our teachers are being tasked with a complex responsibility, so we will rely on our valuable community rapport and continue to build stronger relationships with students and families. While our staff will keep anecdotal records of how students are participating and achieving, the actual grading of work will be limited and minimal.

We want to ensure every student learns something during this pandemic, so the majority of communication will be through Schoology, Zoom, Google, email, phone, district website, and any other way we can reach your child. Our support staff will help bridge the gap for students who need additional one-on-one support. We want our students to advance in their academic, social, and emotional growth before everyone returns to the school building.

For families with limited or no access to technology, Pine Grove Area School District staff will provide printed enrichment and review packets. Please call or email your building principal to make arrangements for obtaining these resources and activities.

Schuylkill Technology Center (STC) and Cardinal Virtual Campus (CVC) students are expected to receive further clarification regarding their education in the upcoming week.

The PGASD Instructional Continuity Plan will continue to be a work in progress over time. Additionally, as teachers and students gain more expertise with online learning, and as questions evolve from our PGASD family, we intend to have ongoing conversations around flexible education with a mindset of continuous improvement. We are aware that no plan is foolproof, especially as we move our entire educational approach to a fully flexible model, in such a short period of time - during this period of a global pandemic.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/19VTC_GDj6lQuFeW9hRHysj13iJf3Xe8z/view?usp=sharing



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What is the status of Pennsylvania State Assessments?

All PSSA testing and Keystone exams for the 2019-20 school year have been cancelled by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Additionally, standardized testing for students in career and technical education (STC) programs for the 2019-20 school year have been cancelled.

On March 20, The College Board posted some very important information concerning this year's AP Exams. AP Exams will not be conducted face-to-face this year and tests will be adjusted to reflect school closures.

PGASD Technology Support

We will communicate our plans to distribute district issued devices in the near future to students who have indicated there is not at least one device in the home. We will begin distribution with Grade 12 students in need and work backwards. More information will follow on this activity.

What will happen to Prom and Graduation (End of Year Activities)?

We understand that this is an extremely trying time for everyone. Aside from the worry of this pandemic, we also worry about what will happen with the many memorable experiences that occur during this time of the school year - musical, spring sports, concerts, dances, field trips, prom, awards, banquets, and graduation. Many of these events are “once in a lifetime” events. It is our intention to do our best to provide these moments to our students instead of cancelling them (if at all possible). As soon as we determine our plans for these events, we will be sure to communicate them to you.

What happens if Pennsylvania closes school for the year?

We will continue to conduct our Instructional Continuity Plan to fruition while following the revised school calendar to closure.

Meals

We will continue to provide Grab-and-Go Bagged lunches twice a week at the two locations throughout the district during implementation of our Instructional Continuity Plan.

Building Level Contacts

High School Principal, Mike Janicelli, mjanicelli@pgasd.com

High School Assistant Principal, Rich Dunkelberger, cdunkelberger@pgasd.com

Middle School Principal, Melissa Mekosh, mmekosh@pgasd.com

Elementary Principal, Sandy Burns, sburns@pgasd.com



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Once again, I feel compelled to express my sincere gratitude for the support of this amazing Pine Grove Area community that we are truly blessed to be a part of.

We are committed to ongoing communication, dedicated and progressive thinking, and an unwavering resolve to come together as an educational community for our students.

Remember, it is important as a community we STAY CALM, STAY HOME, AND STAY SAFE.

Pine Grove Area Proud!

Heath W. Renninger
Superintendent of Schools