

Bellefonte Area School District

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Dr. Michelle R. Saylor, Superintendent
Mrs. Tammie Burnaford, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Kenneth G. Bean, Jr., CMA, Director of Fiscal Affairs

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Dear Bellefonte Area School District Families:

We hope you and your family are doing well! We truly appreciate all that you are doing to help us provide the best remote educational experience that we can for your children. As we enter our second full week of mandatory Planned Instruction, we would like to provide some updates and explanations for our Continuity of Education Plan.

Continuity of Education Plan Update

Beginning this week, teachers will be introducing new content from the curriculum in the core areas and include these assignments on the Choice Board. These activities may require the student to watch video training, read instructions, or join a Google Meet gathering to learn more about the topic or content. Teachers will also provide review and enrichment activities. Students will be required to submit assignments as indicated on the Choice Boards.

All learning will occur through Google Classroom or teacher meetings via Google Meet. More parent information for Google Classroom and Google Meet can be found on the Bellefonte Area School District website (www.basd.net). Families who do not have stable internet access or have difficulty accessing the online instruction, assignments and assessments should contact their child's teacher for assistance and options for alternative plans.

Also please note that all of our schools have the capability of wifi access in the parking lots. While this is not required, families may tap into the district's internet hot spots if they would like. We are asking families who would like to access the wifi hotspots in our building parking lots to please submit a request through the chromebook support email system so that we can ensure a good or better connection., if needed.

Chromebooks

Google Classroom and Google Meet are most easily accessed through the students' Chromebooks. Last week, we distributed student Chromebooks for any family that indicated that they would like to have them. Students who did not receive them may still do so. Please reach out to your building principal for assistance. This week, our technology team will begin to offer more help for technology and Chromebook issues.

Fourth Nine Weeks Grading

After reviewing the mandates from the PA Department of Education and after careful consideration of possible models of grading during this unusual time, our 4th Nine Weeks grading system for students will be modified. This modification reflects and acknowledges the difference in delivery of instruction for our students, from face-to-face to remote learning during the mandated school closure.

As we considered all possible options, a driving force in decision-making was ensuring that the chosen system erred on the side of benefiting students while at the same time considered teachers' work in an entirely new delivery model. Additionally, equity is even more challenging and more concerning with the planned instruction mandates.

Elementary: Grading during COVID19 for our students at the elementary level will encompass a Participate (P) /Did Not Participate (DNP) system.

1. Participate (P) - given to students who have submitted required activities.
2. DNP - given to students who did not complete submissions for the required activities.

A version of a progress report, similar to what was used during the first marking period, will be distributed during the summer, approximately June/July 2020, to share progress and updates with parents given the changed parameters of COVID19.

Secondary (Middle School and High School): Grading will consist of submitting required weekly assignments for teacher feedback and assessment. Those assignments will be logged in Powerschool for completion. Parents may view their children's participation in assignment submission and completion through the Parent Portal (similar to accessing grades in the past). More information about Grading and Final Course Grade Calculations for students will be sent to parents this week. In addition, any grading policies, specific to seniors will be sent out later, as needed. A final report card for students will be mailed home in June/July 2020.

Note: A review of postsecondary institutions' responses to the COVID-19 situation, particularly as it relates to their interpretation of high school transcripts from the spring 2020 semester, indicates that these institutions will examine student records through the lens of whatever grading system a school district chooses to implement. Further, students will be neither penalized nor considered differently should their high schools have alternative reporting methods during this time.

Attendance (all grades)

With the PA's mandatory remote education learning requirement, attendance will also be documented. However, we are keeping this very simple. In short, attendance will be based upon whether your child(ren) participate and complete assignments or not, as follows:

1. Accessing and submitting assignments via Google Classroom or other means
2. Submitting assignments via picture, emails to teachers
3. Accessing and submitting assignments as paper materials (option for students without technology)

Conclusion

The grading structure and attendance procedures for this fourth marking period will enable students to have the greatest opportunity for educational growth and will match and articulate the many variables we face today. We truly appreciate your support and willingness to partner with us to help your child be successful. Should you have any questions specific to your child, please do not hesitate to contact your child's classroom teachers or building principal. They will do their best to respond quickly to your inquiries.

Regardless of the mandates from PDE, our focus will continue to be on the health, welfare and needs of the students, parents, families and teachers in the BASD family. As we mentioned in previous letters and emails, our students, parents, families and teachers all have very diverse situations and needs. Equity issues continue to be even more challenging and more concerning. Please reach out to your child's teacher, counselor or principal if you have concerns. We care deeply for our BASD children, families, staff and community.

As we continue to navigate these uncharted waters, we anticipate that some of our plans will evolve. We hope to send regular updates and share our plans as we move into the last 5 weeks of school and beyond. We appreciate your patience as we make our best effort to support students, academically, socially, and emotionally, now and always.

We hope your families are safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Tammie L. Burnaford
Assistant Superintendent
Bellefonte Area School District.