



# Community Brief: SPPS COVID-19 Response Plan

March 27, 2020

Following an Executive Order issued by Governor Walz, Saint Paul Public Schools are closed until March 27. Instruction will resume through Distance Learning on April 6, after spring break. Following directions from the Governor, families and staff should plan to participate in Distance Learning until at least May 4, 2020.

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## Distance Learning Overview

Saint Paul Public Schools will take advantage of its [Personalized Learning Through Technology](#) infrastructure to support Distance Learning in grades Pre-K through 12. All SPPS K-12 students have been issued iPads as part of our regular instruction. On Monday, April 6, SPPS will begin our Asynchronous Distance Learning program for all students using these devices.

Asynchronous Distance Learning is when a teacher and a student interact with learning activities in different places and at different times. Students enrolled in asynchronous distance learning courses are allowed to complete their work any time of the day that works best for a student and their family.

This style of Distance Learning gives students and families the most flexibility. We believe that, given the current circumstances, this is the best way to launch SPPS Distance Learning.

For attendance purposes, SPPS will require all students to engage with a post from a teacher in Seesaw (K-2) or Schoology (3-12). Teachers will also post daily assignments in those learning platforms at the start of the regular school day.

SPPS Distance Learning relies on students to use their iPad device and participate in online learning platforms such as Seesaw and Schoology. Teachers may use other district-approved technology to engage with students via email, using online courses, setting up group chats and forums, and sharing videos and audio recordings.

At various times during the day, students will have the opportunity to engage with their teachers, participate in group chats, view web-based lessons, and have video meet-ups with teachers and their classmates.

The opportunities for student-teacher engagement will be held during normal school hours, and will be communicated to families by their child's teacher. Teachers will give deadlines for daily assignments.

Teachers will be mindful of resources that may not be available to students in a Distance Learning environment. Successful completion of assignments is not dependent on particular materials or resources (for example, access to a printer). A variety of choices, options and examples of possible resources will be provided to students when possible.

Each school will determine common Distance Learning grading practices, and develop a timeline for student workflow to be used by all teachers at their school. School expectations for the first week of Distance Learning, and moving forward, will be clearly communicated to students, families and staff in the coming days, if it has not been already.

## Distance Learning in Pre-Kindergarten and Early Childhood Special Education

Students enrolled in the District's Pre-Kindergarten and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs will be provided regular instruction through Seesaw and resources from the School Home Partners in Learning program, which are available in multiple languages. Teachers have already been using these tools with families to enable them to help their children with learning throughout the school year.

Distance Learning for this grade level relies on the interaction between children, caregivers and carefully chosen materials. Teachers will provide resources for up to 2.5 hours of daily instruction via Seesaw. It is a regular feature of SPPS Pre-K programming that families agree to collaborate in support learning activities with their children and this will continue in Distance Learning. Families may check in with the teacher daily or weekly depending on arrangements made by an individual family and their teacher. This check-in may be done using Seesaw (video, comment, photo), email or U.S. mail.

In Seesaw, teachers will post at least one daily learning experience from each of five parts of the Early Childhood Workshop model. Caregivers will visit each part of the workshop one time per day with the student.

## Distance Learning in Grades K-5

### Assignments

Assignments will be available daily at a student's regular school start time, 7:30 a.m., 8:30 a.m. or 9:30 a.m.

- K-2 Students: Teachers will post daily assignments in Seesaw
- Grade 3-5 Students: Teachers will post daily assignments in Schoology

A typical day for an elementary school student participating in SPPS Distance Learning is between 2-2.5 hours total. The time students will typically spend online during a school day is 1-2 hours total.

### Attendance

Attendance will be taken when students respond in Seesaw (K-2) or Schoology (3-5) to the daily "Morning Welcome" post from their classroom teacher. Students are required to respond to the "Morning Welcome" message each school day.

- K-2 Students: Will post their response to the Morning Welcome message in Seesaw.
- Grade 3-5 Students: Will post their response to the Morning Welcome message in Schoology.

Distance Learning Activity Examples	
K-2 Seesaw Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Making Reading Goals</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sight Word Practice</a></li> <li>• Math: <a href="#">Which One Doesn't Belong?</a></li> <li>• Math: <a href="#">What's the Same, What's Different?</a></li> </ul>
3-5 Schoology Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Science: Gr 4 State of Matter</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Math Schoology Weekly Activities</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PhyEd (DATE) Screenshot</a></li> </ul>
<a href="#">Literacy Sample Weekly Plan</a> <a href="#">Math Sample Weekly Plan</a>	

## Distance Learning in Grades 6-8

### Assignments

Assignments will be available daily at each school's regular start time (7:30 a.m., 8:30 a.m. or 9:30 a.m.)

- Teachers will post daily assignments in Schoology
- Students will have 2-3 classes per day

A typical school day for a middle school student participating in SPPS Distance Learning is between 3-4 hours total. The time middle school students will typically spend online during a school day is between 2-3 hours.

### Attendance:

Attendance will be taken when students respond in Schoology to the daily post from their Daily Connect Class teacher.

Distance Learning Activity Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Science: 7th Grade Evolution</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Schoology Lesson Screenshot</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Middle School Phy Ed Screenshot</a></li> </ul>

## Distance Learning in Grades 9-12

### Assignments

Assignments will be available daily at your school's regular start time (7:30 a.m., 8:30 a.m. or 9:30 a.m.)

- Teachers will post daily assignments in Schoology
- Students will have 3-4 classes per day

A typical school day for a high school student participating in SPPS Distance Learning is between 4 - 4.5 hours total. The time high school students will typically spend online during a school day is between 3-4 hours.

**Attendance:**

Attendance will be taken when students respond in Schoology to the daily post from their Daily Connect Class teacher.

**Distance Learning Activity Examples**

- [Literacy](#)
- [Ecology Lesson Plan](#)
  - [Ecology Lesson Schoology Screenshots](#)
- [Geometry "Parking Spots" Schoology Screenshots](#)

## Distance Learning at All Levels

### Assessment and Grades

In a Distance Learning environment, teachers will continue to monitor students learning and adjust instruction to meet their needs. Schoology and Seesaw both have grading features and allow students to receive feedback on their assignments. Some adjustments have been made to secondary grading to accommodate missed instruction at the end of quarter 3. Students will receive our standard report cards at the end of the school year.

### Digital Citizenship

The SPPS curriculum incorporates lessons in digital citizenship at all grade levels. Our website, [Digital Citizenship: A Manual for SPPS Educators](#), provides guidance for the Distance Learning environment we are implementing. We encourage families to take advantage of the resources linked there.

### ELL Services

The SPPS Office of Multilingual Learning is committed to providing English Learner (EL) services to the greatest extent possible during Distance Learning. Plans for grades Pre-K through 12 support include options such as:

- Accommodating general education assignments to meet student needs
- Providing online assignments that support students by breaking learning up into chunks and providing a concrete structure for each
- Scheduling time to connect online with students about assignments
- Providing direct service to students via learning systems such as Schoology or Seesaw
- Developing choice boards (where students to choose different ways to learn about a particular concept) for students to work on language learning goals

- Providing consistent communication to support students and families

## Indian Education

Indian Education will continue to provide culturally based services and support for our students and their families.

Indian Education will continue to engage American Indian students in language and cultural groups, college and career exploration, cultural programming and social/emotional learning in an online format. The Office of Indian Education will also continue to offer professional development for SPPS staff and serve as a bridge between American Indian students, families and the school district.

## Social and Emotional Learning

SPPS will apply our Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework as we transition to Distance Learning. Teachers are focusing on the SEL competency of Relationship Skills, “the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.”

It is crucial that relationships between staff and students continue and are strengthened during our school closure and return via Distance Learning. Students of all ages will be pleased to see their teachers’ faces, hear their voices and be in communication. Teachers are using Schoology or Seesaw to begin communicating with students in advance of the April 6 restart of classes. This will help both students and staff begin a routine of using technology in new ways.

## Social Work, Counseling, Health Services

SPPS Support Services Staff are ready to continue to provide high quality service to students, families and staff using our SPPS Distance Learning platforms. Through direct services to students as well as collaboration and consultation with other educators, families, and community partners, we will provide proactive and responsive support to meet the needs of our community.

School social workers provide direct social/emotional instruction and counseling services to students in the distance setting while collaborating with educators to eliminate barriers so all students can continue to make progress. School social workers connect community resources to families based on need and are sharing information about self-care and support during the Covid-19 pandemic with both educators and families.

School counselors working in a virtual setting provide a school counseling program through the use of technology and distance counseling with the same standards and adherence to ethics as school counselors working in traditional school settings. ([American School Counselor Association](#))

Health Start clinics at Como Park Senior High School, Harding Senior High School and Gordon Parks High School will remain open for well-care, nutrition support, mental health support and health education during the school closure. The clinics provide a space for youth who feel healthy to have their preventive and emotional needs met. Information about the clinics is posted on the district's Coronavirus website, [spps.org/covid](https://spps.org/covid)

## Special Education

### **Students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and 504 Plans**

SPPS will ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability will be provided the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP or IFSP developed under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), or a plan developed under Section 504. (34 CFR §§ 300.101 and 300.201 (IDEA), and 34 CFR § 104.33 (Section 504)).

In a Distance Learning environment, special education services and 504 supports may include a combination of options below:

- Co-teaching and designing assignments with general education teachers
- Adapting and/or modifying general education assignments to meet student needs
- Providing adaptive online assignments
- Scheduling time to connect via a telecommunication system with students about assignments
- Providing direct instructional and therapeutic service to students via a telecommunication system
- Developing choice boards for students to work on goals
- Providing regular email communications to families to support student special educational needs.
- Special Ed. IEP Team or 504 meetings with families will be done virtually. *Trained interpreters will be available to support communication with families.*

Special Education Supervisors and Coaches will be supporting special education staff when designing and supporting Distance Learning plans for students in special education. For more information, visit the Office of Specialized Services [website](#).

## Students Experiencing Homelessness

Project REACH is an SPPS shelter and street-based program that promotes school stability and academic success of homeless children and youth. Saint Paul Public Schools REACH team will connect with families and youth currently identified as homeless to monitor their needs and living situations during times of school closure. The REACH team will assist families and staff to ensure students have the support needed to access distance learning services.

REACH staff will also be available to work with schools and agencies to identify and verify families and youth who are experiencing homelessness to ensure they can access all necessary resources. Please see [spps.org/projectreach](https://spps.org/projectreach) for resources.

## Who to Contact for Help with Learning Activities

Families should continue to direct questions about their child's learning to their teachers and seek help directly from the school by email or phone.

## Resources for Educators

SPPS has developed materials for educators to support the transition to Distance Learning. These include Distance Learning guides and professional development courses.

Content area specialists are providing information that helps adjust standards and instruction to the new learning environment and school calendar. These resources are available through Schoology, our learning management system.

As a long-time 1:1 iPad District, SPPS has a library of digital tools and apps available to support learning. All apps and websites accessing student data must be approved for content quality and security guidelines. A list of district approved apps and websites and their data privacy policies is available on the [Personalized Learning website](#).

## Additional Information for Students, Families and Staff

### Athletics, Musical Events and Similar Activities

In keeping with the Governor's order to stay at home and practice social distancing, all Minnesota State High School League events and practices are postponed until further notice.

No SPPS off-site practices or competitions are to be held (i.e. open gym, open field, or the like). History Day, Science Fair and other similar school-sponsors events are also canceled until further notice. All internal or external permits are canceled for the duration of the school closings.

### Communication and Language Support

SPPS is committed to regular communications with families and the community. The district's Coronavirus website, [spps.org/covid](https://spps.org/covid), is the central location for information. The district is also sending updates via email, text and phone as needed.

- Parents who are concerned about the virus itself should contact the Minnesota Department of Health hotline at 651-201-3920.

The district's guidelines for providing communications in English, Spanish, Hmong, Karen and Somali continue to be in place for Distance Learning. Families needing interpreters for school-related communications should call their child's school or the Office of Family Engagement and Community Partnerships at 651-767-8347.

## Meals

Since March 18, school bus routes, curbside pick up, and home deliveries have been used to distribute meals. Each family is provided 10 meals (five breakfast and five lunch) per child. Bus stops and curbside pick up are scheduled each Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Curbside pick up was originally hosted at each school on a designated day (Wednesday through Friday); however, curbside transitioned to 6 designated schools March 25-27. Please visit [spps.org/Page/38722](https://spps.org/Page/38722) for a complete list of meal pickup times and locations as these will may change based on circumstances.

Families who lack transportation or those with medically fragile children were asked to request to have food delivered to their residence. The registration for home delivery has closed, due to capacity. Families who registered will remain on home delivery until further notice. Questions should be directed to the Placement Center. This meal program will be paused over spring break. The Nutrition Services food truck will be utilized for a daily meal program from March 30-April 3.

## Essential Kids Care

Childcare is being provided by SPPS Community Education for the children (ages 5-12) of healthcare workers and emergency personnel.

- The program is available at multiple locations.
- Eligibility is defined through the Governor's Executive Order 20-02 [list of qualifying occupations](#)
- Families register through the [Essential Kid Care website](#), which also has more information.

## Social Distancing and Health Precautions

SPPS is working to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all students, families and staff. At this time, all school buildings are closed and most SPPS staff are working from home.

Staff who are supporting meal service and childcare are following the Minnesota Department of Health recommendations, which include:

- Taking temperatures as staff and participants arrive at Essential Kids Care sites
- Limiting childcare groups to five students and one staff member
- Maintaining 6 feet of social distancing as much as possible
- Frequent hand washing

## Technology Support

Where SPPS staff or students need access to WiFi, they may use the [free Comcast Wifi available specifically for COVID-19](#). A number of hotspots for students and staff are also available for pick-up or delivery.

Support for district-issued technology including iPads, charging accessories, iPad cases and WiFi hotspots is through the District Service Center, 1930 Como Avenue. The Service Center is providing phone, online and curbside trouble-shooting and damage replacements. In special circumstances, home visits can be arranged (651-603-HELP).

## Assessing and Adjusting Our Distance Learning Plan

SPPS has charged a District Learning Steering Committee with monitoring the implementation of our Distance Learning plan. Members include the Chief of Academics, Chief of Schools, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Executive Director of Digital and Alternative Education, Director of Communications, the Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment, and the Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Project management. This group has been meeting three times a week to receive reports and address issues for three phases of planning:

- Phase 1: Access to iPads and Wifi & determining technical support for devices
- Phase 2: Developing capacity of all staff using Distance Learning tools and resources.
- Phase 3: Defining Distance Learning instructional models and developing the capacity of staff to be successful and students to be ready.

Our indicators of success in implementing Phases 1 and 2 include:

- The number of students with access to iPad and internet technology
- How well technology systems are adjusting to the increase in demand
- Staff responses to a survey on readiness for Distance Learning Instruction
- The participation of staff in Distance Learning professional development
- The number of meals served and if the demand is being met
- The number of children enrolled in Essential Kids Care and if the demand is being met

Phase 3 indicators include:

- Student attendance data
- Teacher and student learning platform (Seesaw and Schoology) staff, student, and family usage data
- Library of SPPS Distance Learning lesson resources available

Information gathered thus far demonstrates an impressive level of success, built on the efforts of every employee in the District. For example, 99% of our over 36,000 students have been provided with iPads, and we are supplying meals to more than 40,000 students. We are confident that we are ready to provide rigorous and equitable Distance Learning experiences for all students in the weeks to come. We also know that the scope of this transition has been unprecedented and we will continue to listen to feedback from our community and adjust or revamp as we learn with them.

