



# South Fayette Township School District

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March 23, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Today the Department of Education (PDE) announced today that all schools in the Commonwealth will remain closed through at least April 6 as a result of the COVID-19 response efforts. **The closure order could be extended beyond April 6 if necessary to save lives and stop the spread of COVID-19.**

## **Extended School Closure**

Under the new state timeline, South Fayette Township School District remains closed until further notification from the state. However, the state-mandated extended school closure does not mean that continuity of instruction cannot proceed. The state will not penalize school districts for not meeting 180 instructional days and is encouraging schools to offer instruction in some form.

## **Online Learning Beginning March 30**

Over the last week, with the support of the Board of Directors, our administration and teachers' union, we have put policies and practices in place for the continuity of education through an online/digital learning plan that will still begin March 30.

Our plan for digital/online learning emphasizes keeping students engaged in learning with the hope of bringing a sense of normalcy to their lives. We realize that many of you are balancing work and being at home with your own young children. Our goal is not to replicate our rigorous curriculum, which is a challenge through an all-digital format. Instead we are adopting an asynchronous approach to learning through our online/digital learning plan. Students will work at their own pace, not all together as a class or at a specific class time. Students will have a reduced workload (not 7.5 hours on the computer). Work will be meaningful and elicit critical thinking, since students will have the time to dive deeper into the lessons.

## **Communication for Online Learning**

This week, our teachers will be making preparations to deliver instruction online, so that beginning March 30, students will begin lessons from home. Grade K-2 teachers will share assignments through parent/guardian email. All communications of learning assignments will travel through Google Classroom for grades 3-12. Teachers will email specific information on accessing classes using Google Classroom as well as additional information including how parents and students can communicate. We realize that communication is important for successful implementation of this plan. Before lessons begin, you will receive a follow-up communication with specific instructions from your teachers. In addition, teachers and principals will share general updates weekly with parents/guardians.

To help answer any questions you may have, teachers and professional staff will be available for “office hours” via email and/or Google Classroom from 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday beginning March 30. More information on how to access this will be provided by teachers and the administration.

### **No Internet Access/Access to Devices**

All assignments will be available in a hard copy format for any student without Internet access. The packets will be distributed to families via U.S. Mail. The district is continuing to reach out to all families to discover which families do not currently have Internet access in the home. We are communicating with those families about Comcast’s Free/Reduced price Internet program to try to ensure online access for all students. Families can call Comcast directly at [855-846-8376](tel:855-846-8376). We ask that any families without internet service please call [412-221-4542](tel:412-221-4542), Ext. 862. You will receive a voice message asking you to leave your name, phone number, and mailing address so that we may contact you. This will enable us to provide learning materials and resources so that all students will have access to the curriculum. The same is true for students who do not have their devices at home or have devices that are not working. Students and families can use their own devices to access Google Classroom and Classlink, which provide links to assignments and applications. Classlink is accessible at the following address <https://launchpad.classlink.com/southfayette>.

### **Free/Reduced Meals Continue**

South Fayette Food Service Department will continue to provide meals (curbside) to students of families that qualify for the School Breakfast Program and/or National Lunch Program. Parents may drive around the back area of the high school to pick up their meal. The meals will be distributed curbside. No appointments necessary. Times for meal service pick-up will remain from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., Monday through Friday. If you have any questions, please feel free to call: [412-221-4542](tel:412-221-4542) x 277 or 276 or email [foodservice@southfayette.org](mailto:foodservice@southfayette.org).

### **Additional Information**

As a reminder, students and their families can access [optional learning resources](#) and [counseling resources](#) as needed. This information and more can be found on our website at [www.southfayette.org](http://www.southfayette.org). We also have a [COVID-19 Preparedness link](#) where families can go for ongoing updates and additional information.

In a time when social distancing and school closures have become the new normal, we have learned that we are resilient, we are resourceful, and we are a community that cares. I will continue to send updates as this crisis evolves.

Be safe and well.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ken Lockette, Superintendent of Schools