



**Shaler Area School District**  
**7-12 Continuity of Education Plan Update**  
**Assessment/Grading, AP/SAT, Transcripts & Athletics Information**  
**April 15, 2020**

Dear Shaler Area families,

As reported to you on Thursday, April 9, 2020, Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera have extended the state mandated school closure through the end of the 2019-20 academic year. While we understand that this comes with a mix of emotions, please rest assured that Shaler Area School District is making all necessary plans to complete this school year in the best possible manner, given our current circumstances. The last day for all students in the Shaler Area School District will be Friday, June 5, 2020.

Below you will find updates on several pertinent topics. We look forward to working with you to provide the best education possible for each and every student. As always, we are here to serve you. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teachers, principal, or either of us.

**Grading and Assessment**

As we implement the planned instruction model in our Continuity of Education Plan, grading in this new environment looks different than we are used to at Shaler Area School District. Due to the extended school closure, we will be modifying our grading model effective **Monday, April 20, 2020**. Our teachers will continue to work with students/families to address the need for assignment extension based on individual circumstances. As a result, the District will suspend Board Policy 213: Assessment of Student Progress for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

As previously reported, the calendar has been modified, so that the third nine weeks ended on March 13, 2020. Students have had every opportunity to send teachers anything that may be needed to close out the third nine weeks. If you have any specific concerns, please contact your child's teacher or principal

**Grades 7-8 (Middle School)**

Completion of assignments is mandatory for students. For students in grades 7-8, teachers will not assess student work on a Pass/Fail or traditional grading scale for the 4<sup>th</sup> nine weeks. Rather, student work will be evaluated based upon engagement and work completion. We believe that during this unprecedented time, the focus of our middle level learners should be on content exposure and engagement vs. traditional grading methods. Teachers will directly contact the parent/guardian of any student who is not actively engaging. Students in Grades K-8 will not receive a Report Card for the 4<sup>th</sup> nine weeks. *Please note: If a middle school student is taking a course designated as a high school level course (Algebra I & Geometry only), they will follow the Pass/Fail guidelines noted below for students in Grades 9-12 for that specific course.*

**Grades 9-12 (High School)**

Completion of assignments is mandatory for students. For students in Grades 9-12, a Pass/Fail system will be utilized for the 4<sup>th</sup> nine weeks report card.

- **PASS:** Students earning at least 60% of the points will receive a pass.

- **FAIL:** Students earning 59% or less of the points will receive a fail.
- The Pass/Fail designations will be exempt from a student's QPA.
- Remote Learning will not negatively impact a student's overall grade.
- The Overall Pass/Fail grade for the course will be determined by an average of the First 3 Nine Weeks' grades.
- If a student's grade at the conclusion of the 3rd nine weeks falls short of meeting a prerequisite or passing a course, then the student's 4th quarter performance may be used to enhance the student's opportunity towards passing the course or meeting the prerequisite.

### **Curriculum Sequencing**

The District is currently identifying the key curricular concepts that will be taught through the remainder of the school year. Our focus will be to address the most critical/essential topics that students will need to be exposed to moving into the next grade level. These identified skills will be the focus of our Remote Learning lessons. As a reminder, our staff is adhering to the following guidelines when planning lessons for our youngest learners based upon best practices for online learning.

- **25 - 45 minutes** per subject area for secondary students

Please know that the District is actively putting plans into place for the transition to occur at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year to ensure that all students receive a well-rounded education despite the state mandated school closure.

### **End of the Year Activities**

We understand that there are many questions about end of the year activities at all of our schools. Unfortunately, the District has not made a final determination regarding many events (including Graduation, Prom and move-up events). We will continue to follow the directives of the Governor's Office, PA Department of Health and CDC. Most of these events will need to be held in a different format than originally planned in order to adhere to strict Social Distancing Guidelines.

Please know that the Administration is committed to providing opportunities to celebrate the tremendous accomplishments of our students and know how important that this is for our entire school community. School Principals and District Administration will continue to provide updates as available.

### **Item Pickup**

We have received many questions regarding picking up remaining items that your child may have at the school. Please know that we are working on procedures for students and/or parents to do this safely. Our goal is to gather as many of your child's items as possible into one pickup so that we can reduce the number of trips to school and limit the exposure for all involved. In the coming weeks as plans become available, a follow-up email will be sent with details.

### **Final Exams**

No final exams will be administered at Shaler Area Middle or High School, unless required by our College in High School program via an approved articulation agreement.

### **Advanced Placement Testing**

The school counselors have contacted students involved with our Advanced Placement program to share that the College Board has provided the following guidance: <https://pages.collegeboard.org/sat-covid-19-updates>. Advanced Placement teachers and school counselors will follow-up with students to discuss their interest in taking the College Board's revised, in-home exam administration.

### **SAT Exams**

The College Board has canceled the May 2, 2020 and June 6, 2020 SAT administration. For updated information regarding testing changes and new administration dates, continue to visit:

<https://pages.collegeboard.org/sat-covid-19-updates>.

### **State Assessments (PSSA, Keystone Exam & PASA)**

On March 19, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) announced that it is canceling all state assessments, PSSA testing and Keystone exams for the 2019-20 school year as a result of COVID-19. This includes the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA).

Any course that required a prerequisite of passing a Keystone Exam will be waived for the 2019-20 Spring Keystone Exam administration. Please consult with a school counselor if you have questions regarding this waiver.

### **Transcripts**

Shaler Area High School will make a notation on both its transcript and school profile that a P/F grading system was implemented for the 4th nine weeks for the 2019-2020 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This notation will be made for the Classes of 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

### **Future College Admissions**

Most colleges/universities support the decisions made by high school faculty and administrators regarding what grading methods they think most appropriate given the academic adjustments required by the public health challenges we are all facing. Accordingly, they are typically deferring to what the high school believes most appropriate for grading methods in the spring semester 2020.

Colleges/universities are intending to be flexible in these atypical times and not hold students accountable for things beyond their control, but still expect them to engage in their school work to the best of their ability (acknowledging that circumstances will not be consistent for all students based on home arrangements/dynamics, access to internet, etc.).

Students should consult with their School Counselor and/or prospective college/university to discuss the college application process and respective admission criteria due to COVID-19.

### **PIAA/WPIAL Athletics**

In accordance with Governor Tom Wolf's announcement that Pennsylvania schools will be closed to in-person learning for the remainder of the school year, the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc. (PIAA) has canceled all remaining Winter and Spring sports and championships.

More information will be communicated via <http://www.piaa.org> as it becomes available.

### **NCAA Eligibility Center**

The NCAA Eligibility Center has received a number of inquiries regarding potential adjustments to the initial eligibility certification process as a result of closures, cancellations and changes due to COVID-19. NCAA is working closely with member institutions and making progress toward national solutions to the issues raised for both Divisions I and II. They will communicate the details of these adjustments in the coming weeks upon complete review through its governance processes.

For information on COVID-19, please visit [ncaa.org/COVID-19](http://ncaa.org/COVID-19) and continue to monitor for more information from the Eligibility Center at [on.ncaa.com/EC\\_COVID.4](https://on.ncaa.com/EC_COVID.4).

**District Website**

To help our families stay informed, we will continue to share relevant information and resources on our website: <http://www.sasd.k12.pa.us/COVID-19.aspx>. Please continue to use this site as a resource during this closure.

The safety and security of our students is our number one priority. We also emphasize that family always comes first, especially in the midst of these challenging and turbulent times. Please know that we recognize the challenges many families are facing, and we are here to support you and will do whatever we can to meet the needs of our community. Please stay safe and healthy, and as always, thank you for your patience and understanding during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Sean C. Aiken  
Superintendent of Schools

Bryan E. O'Black, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent