

Shaler Area School District

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March 20, 2020

Good afternoon Shaler Area families,

I hope this email finds your family safe during an unprecedented time in our region, state, country, and world. The fluid and uncertain nature of this situation has placed a tremendous amount of concern and anxiety on communities. While we understand and value the importance of education, we recognize that our current struggles and challenges extend beyond the classroom and schools. In light of keeping things in perspective, we have a few important updates to share:

Food Service

The district will continue to offer free grab-and-go breakfast and lunch each weekday. The meals will be packaged together and available for pick-up from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Northern Area Boys and Girls Club, 100 Howard Street, in Millvale (the former Holy Spirit Parish School) and Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 66 Grant Avenue, in Etna.

The free breakfast and lunch service is available to any student age 18 and younger. To encourage social distancing and prevent the spread of illness, we ask that students and families not congregate at the site after receiving the meals. This service is not available on the weekends; however, students will receive additional meals on Friday for the weekend. If you have additional questions, please contact Sue Cook at cooks@sasd.k12.pa.us.

State Assessments

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).

Continuity of Education Plan

The district is finalizing a continuity of education plan for students K-12. If our district remains closed beyond Friday, March 27, **we intend to provide students with some form of school work that can be completed at home and will begin Monday, March 30.** At this time, we are uncertain as to the possible extension of a school shutdown, but this could change at any time.

We are acutely aware of concerns with equity and other factors related to the current pandemic, and we plan to take these matters into consideration while planning for continuity of educational programming. Thank you again for your patience during this unprecedented time.

Home Technology Survey

We are surveying the school community to gather information from families who may be in need of technology in the event that the district moves to online education. If your family may have a need for technology or internet access, please take a moment to complete the survey using the following link: <https://forms.gle/4u8PoFtyjY7Q7mM7>. If you already have sufficient internet service and sufficient devices for each student in your household to use, there is no need to complete this survey. If you are unable to complete the survey via the link, please email your building principal or, if necessary, complete a hard copy survey by visiting our grab-and-go meal sites. Please complete this survey AS SOON AS POSSIBLE to help us with our planning.

Educational Resources/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>. The site includes tips on how to talk to children of all ages about the coronavirus, educational resources that can be used during the closure, and preventative measures that you can take at home. Please continue to use this site as a resource during this closure.

Home Internet Service

If you or any family you know does not have access to internet at their home, Internet Essentials from Comcast is offering new customers two free months of internet service. More information on this program is available on our site: <http://www.sasd.k12.pa.us/COVID-19.aspx>.

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 are here to support you and will do whatever we can to meet the needs of our community at this time. Please be safe and take care.

Sincerely,

Mr. Sean C. Aiken
Superintendent of Schools
Shaler Area School District

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