

Steel Valley School District- Continuity of Education Plan

April 9, 2020

School District	Steel Valley School District (SVSD)
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Goal of the Plan
The goal of SVSD during the state-mandated closure is two-fold: to support the educational skill development of our students; and to support the non-educational needs of our students and their families.

Overview of the Plan
<p>By leveraging our existing infrastructure of 1:1 iPads, SVSD is conducting remote learning primarily through the Internet. Our students in grades 6 – 12 take their iPads home, so most of them had their devices when Gov. Wolf began the school closure. In contrast, students in grades K – 5 keep their iPads in classroom carts to charge overnight. SVSD distributed iPads to our K – 5 students between 3/30 and 4/1 at Barrett Elementary and Park Elementary schools. As we identify families that lack Internet access, we help them get that access through different providers.</p> <p>SVSD students completed their Flexible Instruction Day (FID) packets #3 – 5 on April 1 – 3. Remote learning began on Monday, April 6. Students who are unable to complete online assignments have packets of paper assignments sent to them through the mail by their principal.</p> <p>This time of school closure and stay-at-home mandate from Gov. Wolf is incredibly life-changing and stressful for all of us, both students and adults. Our teachers, principals and paraprofessionals are adapting to the new remote learning system while also dealing with the needs of their own families. Our students are coping with the fear and anxiety caused by the pandemic, and some of them face additional responsibilities such as work or the care of their siblings. There will be times when students or teachers are not able to get things done immediately, because of any of a multitude of reasons, and SVSD will provide the flexibility that they need.</p> <p>To support the non-educational needs of our students and their families, we have created the Steel Valley Family Support Program. UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, with volunteer graduate students from the University of Pittsburgh, are reaching out to our families through weekly phone calls. The volunteers ask parents how their children are doing with their learning, and they also ask how the family is coping with the stay-at-home order. The volunteers have information on many different resources that are available. For families with specific needs, they are referred to our</p>

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guidance counselors and success coaches. The Allegheny County Department of Human Services is also partnering with us in this effort and providing the full range of their support services.

A significant part of our efforts to support our families is through the grab 'n' go meal bags that our Food Services Department supplies to the children in our community, which has a considerable level of food insecurity. SVSD provides daily meal bags- hot or cold lunch, the next day's breakfast, and a snack- Monday through Friday. At the time of this plan's development, we are distributing approximately 450 meal bags per day. These meal bags are available to all children in our community, not just the students in our schools.

Expectations for Teaching and Learning

The expectation for teaching and learning is for students to receive instruction which focuses on the reinforcement and enrichment of previously taught skills. During this time of great change in the lives of our students and teachers, we believe that the introduction of new concepts may lead to frustration and stress for both the teacher and the learner. Solidifying the skills gained before the closure order on March 13 is extremely important.

Our collective mental health will be critical when regular operations resume, and we believe that our focus on reinforcement and enrichment will help us have healthier people in both the short-term and the long-term. As we move deeper into the remainder of the 2019 – 2020 school year, our teachers and principals will evaluate whether to add new instruction to our remote learning.

If SVSD had had a robust learning management system (LMS) in place prior to the pandemic, then we would have been better positioned to move forward with new instruction. SVSD acknowledges that months and years of professional development and experience are required before an LMS would be fully operational and able to deliver maximum value during a time of closure like we are experiencing right now. Developing a robust LMS at SVSD is now a goal for the district.

Communication Tools and Strategies

SVSD is utilizing multiple communication channels during this school closure: phone blasts, letters home, website updates, and posts to social media.

Volunteers from the graduate schools of the University of Pittsburgh are working with UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP) to contact our families regularly. SVSD has set up an account on CallHub, a call center software system that often is used by political candidates and parties, and the volunteers make the calls to our families through the CallHub system with a SVSD phone number. Because CHP just began making calls on April 6, 2020, we do not have data yet to show the effectiveness of this partnership. However, we know that the longer schools are closed as part of the stay-at-home mandate, the impact will widen and deepen. The sooner our students and families get assistance, the less negative the outcomes will be for them. For some student or family issues, our guidance counselors and success coaches will be able to provide the needed aid. Other issues may require services provided by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (ACDHS), and we have a process in place to connect our families with ACDHS, if needed.

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We are grateful for the partnership with CHP and ACDHS, and we really appreciate the involvement of our Pitt volunteers.

Access (Devices, Platforms, Handouts)

Students from Steel Valley are enrolled in a 1:1 Apple iPad device environment. All students 6-12 have had free access to take their iPads home with them. Our students K-5 normally keep their iPads in a charging cart in their homerooms. We are now permitting the student in grades K-5 to possess their iPads at home. The district provides protection for our students by removing the App Store on the iPads. Any App the district approves will be added in a private app store we manage called Self-Service. Any application the teachers utilize in their classroom can be found there to be downloaded to the iPad.

The communication platform for remote learning that we have chosen is Google Classroom. The district owns a domain within Google suites to provide a managed environment for our district. Teachers set up the classes for students to retrieve assignments and communicate with their instructors. The teacher has freedom to expand their platform to include access to other education applications to support the assignments they post within Google Classroom.

The district has been providing handouts, videos and links to help students and parents gain access and manage the device and their education programs. This information is posted on the District's website and on social media for the individual schools' Facebook pages. Teachers have also set up communication /interactive applications within their class to provide handout support along with posting them on their Google Classroom pages.

Although every SVSD student has an iPad, that does not mean that all of them have regular and sufficient access to the Internet. Our teachers have been diligent in identifying students that face hurdles- including Internet access- with remote learning, and we work on a case-by-case basis to resolve the issues facing the family. If necessary, our principals will mail home packets of paper assignments for the students for whom the online option is not tenable.

Staff General Expectations

Teachers are expected to create classes utilizing Google Classroom, invite students to join their classes, and provide content specific instruction. As stated earlier in the document, staff-provided instruction should focus on the reinforcement and enrichment of previously taught skills. Staff should review submitted work and provide feedback. Student grading will be conducted in a Pass/Fail format. Classroom teachers should be available to answer any student questions.

Paraprofessionals are expected to support the learning of our students, particularly special education students. Principals are expected to provide educational and operational leadership; secretaries are expected to assist administrators and to contribute to effective communications with all stakeholders. Food service workers are expected to provide nutritious meal bags for the children in our community. Custodians are expected to keep our buildings clean, to ensure that building systems operate

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properly, and to disinfect the areas where people work or pick up food. The business office is expected to maintain continuity of operations by processing payroll and invoices.

We expect all of our employees to give their best efforts and to model good health practices such as social distancing, covering coughs and sneezes, and frequent hand-washing.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to register for courses, utilizing Google Classroom. Once enrolled, students are to adhere to the guidelines specified by their classroom teacher. Assignments should be submitted by the due date provided by the teacher. We expect our students to give their best efforts.

Attendance / Accountability

Attendance will be determined by student participation on submitted assignments.

Good Faith Efforts for Access and Equity for All Students

Steel Valley is a 1:1 district with iPads for students in grades 6-12 for school and home use. All K-5 students have iPads at school but with the school closure, arrangements were made to distribute iPads to all elementary students and to any student K-12 that needs one. Families and students have been given multiple opportunities to request to borrow one. We held several district-wide device pick up days at convenient locations and continue to arrange for families to pick up a device if they still need one. Training videos on topics such as iPad Charging, Logging in to Gmail and Logging into Goggle Classroom are posted on the district's website at www.steelvalleysd.org to assist students and families.

In preparing for the time of enrichment and review, the district worked to determine the level of access for each student using phone blasts, letters, Facebook posts, building level information and sharing within the community. Working from that information, the appropriate access was determined and adjusted as appropriate. We are providing on-line instruction and /or paper and pencil assignments to all of our students in order to provide continuity of educational services during the school closure. Additionally, during this time, all continuity of education plans from any approved private school or private licensed school were collected and reviewed to ensure the same level of appropriateness for all learners. If the level of access should change throughout the span of this plan, parents and students have been given contact information to communicate their needs, and their method of instruction delivery will be updated.

All students have access to School Counselors and, as needed, licensed professional counselors and our district Success Coaches where families and students may obtain support, understanding and information to access mental health services and other community daily living resources.

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Special Education Supports

The Steel Valley School District will continue to provide all children with disabilities with a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) during this time. Although the determination of how FAPE is to be provided may need to be different in this time of the unprecedented national emergency, it is the District's intention to provide student services, including related services, to the greatest extent possible.

The Steel Valley School District is committed to working with the parents/guardians of our students to provide an individualized continuity of learning plan through the duration of a school closure. Students with disabilities will have access to online instructional materials through Google Classroom, Google Hangout, Zoom, TeachTown and/or ClassDojo.

Related Services, including occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language therapy, paraprofessional support, social skills, supports for hearing impairments and visual impairment will continue to be provided asynchronously as well as through Google Classroom, Google Hangouts, SLP Assist, and/or Zoom. Each student's case manager or special education teacher and related service providers will contact families to discuss these services.

EL Supports

The instruction delivered by the Steel Valley School District ESL teacher will continue for the duration of the school closure and while being delivered remotely. The ESL teacher will continue providing English Language Development instruction to the students via Google Classroom, Zoom and/or Khan Academy. The curriculum used by the program is available digitally, therefore, students will be able to continue their progress through the content and standards as they would have previously, and online assessment will allow the teacher to track the students' progress. The ESL teacher is available for ongoing support to both the students and their families and will collaborate with the students' classroom and content area teachers to assure that the students are able to successfully transition to remote instruction in all of their subject areas. Support for translation and interpretation will be used where necessary and appropriate for both students and families.

Gifted Education

Gifted Support students will be provided with a variety of online learning activities consistent with their interests and GIEP goals. Gifted Teachers will continue to consult with Regular Education Staff to provide enrichment to instruction. In addition, Gifted Teachers will be available to students and their families with any questions or guidance needed in completing individual or group projects.

Building/Grade Level Contacts

Barrett Elementary (K – 4)	Kevin Walsh, Principal	412-464-3600 x5505
Park Elementary (K – 4)	Dr. Thomas Shaughnessy, Principal	412-464-3600 x4505
SV Middle School (5 – 8)	Dr. Aaron Johnson, Secondary Associate Principal	412-464-3600 x3505
SV High School (9 – 12)	John Strom, Secondary Associate Principal	412-464-3600 x2505

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Resource Links

<https://www.steelvalleypd.org/parents-students/distance-learning>

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We know that the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 and the sudden change of daily routines can cause added stress on our students. We have communicated several emotional support resources for families and students coping with the pandemic on our website.