

Otto-Eldred School District

Questions & Answers Related to the COVID-19 Closure

March 20, 2020

1. When will schools re-open?

Currently, schools are closed through March 27. Based on Governor Wolf's announcement last night, we can anticipate the closure lasting longer. Any recommended school closure by the CDC is for longer than 2 weeks. Before any consideration is made to re-open, our area as well as all of Pennsylvania needs access to adequate COVID-19 testing. The extent of the spread of the virus needs to be understood. Until then, it is important for all of us to follow CDC recommendations related to Social Distancing, using good hygiene and Staying Home.

2. Will we have to make-up days missed due to the COVID-19 school closure?

The Governor did announce that no school will be penalized for not meeting the 180 day requirement for schools. This does not mean the 9 days (for O-E) would not need to be made up. During this current closure (through 3/27), there is no expectation for instruction to occur. This is not a statement related to making up the days. Local school boards will determine the necessary adjustments to school calendars based upon days available to complete a school year.

3. Will we be required to go to school through June?

As stated in #2, local school boards will approve any adjustment to school calendars. PA School Code dictates that a school year must end by June 30 and also allows for schools to operate on one Saturday per month. While it is way too early to announce any school calendar change, we should all be prepared for school to be in session during some portion of June.

4. Can my child pick up materials from the school? Should they clean out their locker?

We will only allow someone that is not "essential staff" in the building on a very limited basis. We will collect uniforms and scholarship applications during our meal service time at each building daily. If a student needs to pick up any item in either building, they should call or email at least 1 day in advance. Call 817-1380 (select option for either building) or email lburns@ottoeldred.org or hramsey@ottoeldred.org. At this time, we are not asking students to clean out lockers.

5. Will the school continue to serve meals?

We will continue to serve meals for as long as we can safely. If we do not have enough healthy staff members bus drivers to continue our home deliver and site pick up options, we will alter plans for funding

6. Is the school paying for these meals?

The program we utilize to serve meals is the same program used for our Summer Lunch program. It is free to all students under age 18. The Federal Lunch Program reimburses the district for meals delivered, this funding pays for the food and for the labor. If we prepare more meals than distributed, the school then would not be reimbursed for any unused meals. The more who take meals, the more reimbursement received.

7. Is the track or playground available for use during the closure?

Unfortunately, we must close all district building and facilities during this closure. This includes closing the track and playground. We appreciate your cooperation with this Social Distancing Strategy.

8. Why are we not moving directly to online instruction district-wide?

Pennsylvania Department of Education(PDE) is not recommending that districts move to offering instruction online at this time. There is no approved transition plan in place to allow this so that schools get credit toward the annual required hours and days of instruction.

If a district provides online education to one student, the district must provide online instruction to all students effectively. That is a challenge due to the variety of ages and abilities we must serve.

Additionally, many students in our district do not have reliable internet service. Teachers will provide a list of Supplemental Learning Exercises that are optional activities to help students keep engaged in worthwhile content. These opportunities are not required. Anything that is completed does not need to be returned to school. New opportunities will be shared weekly with students across the district and sent out with meals and through email/social media. These experiences will not replace any days or hours of instruction. We are hoping that PDE provides guidance as to how we may transition to online learning in a manner that can count toward instructional requirements.

9. I don't have internet or a computer, how will my child be educated?

Each home received a phone call to survey connectivity and device availability throughout our district. We are exploring opportunities to assist families with internet access and additional devices. This will allow students to engage with current learning resources we have available such as ST Math, Lexia, Aleks, or Discovery Ed. Additionally, Spectrum (as well as others) is currently offering free internet to families for 2 months:

Charter will offer free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi access for 60 days to households with K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a Spectrum broadband subscription and at any service level up to 100 Mbps. To enroll call **1-844-488-8395**. Installation fees will be waived for new student households. (This may only be accessible in the Eldred area)

10. I am a senior, will I graduate on time?

We are very aware of the concerns related to our seniors. We would like to provide you specifics as soon as possible, but due to the limitations in #8 above, we must patiently wait for further guidance. In the near future, we will complete an analysis of seniors and their current status related to graduation. We anticipate many seniors already meeting graduation requirements. We cannot say with any certainty that a graduation ceremony could be scheduled in the near future.

11. What will happen with the PSSAs and Keystones?

As of the announcement on March 19, Keystone Exams, the PASA and PSSA tests are cancelled for the 2019-20 school year. This is a one-year waiver for 2019-20 academic year. As more information is provided, we will notify students how this decision would affect the completion of their current Keystone courses (Algebra, Biology, Literature) and graduation requirements.

12. How will we complete dual enrollment courses or our current online course?

Because most of dual enrollment courses have already exceeded the minimum hourly requirement from our dual enrollment partners, we will have some flexibility in the completion of those courses. Through March 27, nothing is required from any student in any dual enrollment or online course. Students may choose to continue working in online courses. No student will be penalized for lack of completion of coursework during the current school closure (through 3/27).

13. Since staffing at the schools is limited, who should I contact if I have a question?

As of Friday, March 20 we will **not** have secretaries working in each building on a regular basis. Please email or call with any needs or questions. Voicemail messages will be checked daily. We will use social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to communicate information, however, please email or call with any questions. Also, you are encouraged to follow the district social media sites. We are aware that questions are being posted to other community sites. Please be sure to contact us with any questions. We will do our best to give you the most up-to-date answer possible.

Phone: **817-1380**

Emails: mattsplain@ottoeldred.org

jflexman@ottoeldred.org

ckrott@ottoeldred.org

lburns@ottoeldred.org

hramsey@ottoeldred.org

mmerry@ottoeldred.org

14. Can we receive paper-based activities, even if they can't be given back?

Providing paper-based activities for students across all grade levels would require many more staff within our building. In keeping with the Governor's directive, we have minimal staff in each building, and therefore, no opportunity to copy and distribute that amount of material.

15. What can I do with my children?

The district distributed an initial learning “menu” of activities. By March 30, we anticipate distribution of our first batch of Supplemental Learning Experiences. You can get started by planning a workspace for your student and developing a daily schedule that would mirror a school day. The opportunity for parents and children to “connect” has never been greater. The challenges of being physically isolated from our friends and family will become more and more difficult. We will provide as much support as possible during this closure.

16. What about grades for the 3rd 9 weeks?

We are considering the 3rd 9 weeks to be complete. Due to absences, there may be a few assignments that need completed by a few students. This should be minimal. As always, grades are available online through our CSIU parent portal. If you do not have access, please email Mrs. Cochran at jcochran@ottoeldred.org. We anticipate sending out summary reports for the PreK-3rd grade standards-based reporting in the near future.

17. What about my student’s IEP? What will happen to any meeting scheduled for my child’s IEP team?

We have received some guidance related to Special Education procedures. Scheduled meetings are still planned, however, they would take place over the phone. Mrs. Burns will be in contact regarding changes in meetings or evaluations that are taking place.