

Distance Learning in the Trumbull Public Schools: Questions & Answers

with Jonathan Budd, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent, and Christina Hefele, Director of Digital Learning

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The following is pertinent information to help educate the community of the plans of Trumbull Public Schools. It is a paraphrase of the question & answer period of the March 20, 2020 Distance Learning in the Trumbull Public Schools presentation by Jonathan Budd, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent, and Christina Hefele, Director of Digital Learning. The full presentation may be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PoF6vfsGtP4&feature=youtu.be>.

What are the parameters for requesting a technology device for my child?

Any parent who needs a device can call Dr. Budd's office at 203-452-4336 or go to the TPS website and complete [the IT Request form](#). Someone will then notify you of the next steps. Please note that there is no rental fee for a device, and all families in need should contact TPS.

What printed materials are available?

Due to limited TPS staff working on site, printed materials are provided only for families without digital access or Internet in their homes. If you have concerns in this regard, please contact Dr. Budd's office at 203-452-4336.

Does the device at home have to be a Chromebook?

Any device the student is used to using, whether a Chromebook or not, is fine, especially for grades 3-12. We just suggest that it have a big enough screen with a keyboard device to type efficiently. For grades PreK-2, most activities are to be done offline, so a device such as an iPad would be fine for the supplemental work.

What are the hours when students need to work?

Students can work whenever they are able to work; they don't have to be the same hours when teachers are available.

What should we do if we are not receiving eBlasts from TPS?

You can contact either Christina Hefele at chefele@trumbullps.org or Dr Budd at jbudd@trumbullps.org and request a e-mail update. To see if we have your correct phone or e-mail on file, please log into the Infinite Campus portal, click the "People" icon on the top right, go to "Settings," and then "Contact Preferences"; you can self-correct and save the information if needed.

What to do if my device needs technical improvement (e.g., the screen breaks, the device stops working, etc.)

Click on [the IT Request form](#) provided on our homepage at www.trumbullps.org. Once your form is submitted, we'll contact you about when to bring your device in, and provide a loaner to you while your device is getting fixed.

How are we dealing with students who may not have the necessary materials at home with them?

Due to the buildings being closed for mandatory sanitary measures, students are not allowed to retrieve things from their classrooms or lockers. Teachers are being sensitive to the fact that students may not have certain materials with them. However, if you feel that a teacher may erroneously have assumed that your child has specific materials at home, a pleasant e-mail to the teacher may be helpful. This way, the teacher can see if they can provide some alternatives that will work for your child.

Is printing at home necessary?

Printing at home is not necessary. Teachers are creating materials that can be viewed and worked with on a reasonably sized computer screen. However, if you find your child needs this avenue, please contact your teacher to see what possibly may be done to help meet your needs.

What is the Parent/Guardian part of Google Classroom?

Google Classroom has a feature to give parents/guardians a weekly (or daily) notification with a summary of all the Google Classroom's postings from the teacher. As a district, we are currently working on getting the parent/guardian e-mails from Infinite Campus entered into Google Classroom, so Google Classroom will then automatically send notifications from the teacher's assignments for grades 3-12. We are also producing weekly e-newsletters for parents; they will include a lot of technology tips and curriculum news. The first one will deal with Google Classroom.

Should my child know how to log onto Google Classroom, and what if my child doesn't?

Most of the students, from Grades 3-12, have already been using Google Classroom, but if assistance is still needed, please contact your child's classroom teacher for help.

What is the procedure if there are more questions for special groups, such as special education or ELL students?

We issued the Distance Learning plan for all students on March 18, and then the Distance Learning Plan for Special Education and Related Services on March 19. Both are posted on our website. Please check these documents first, but if further assistance is needed, contact our Interim Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Kim Hapken, Ed.D., at khapken@trumbullps.org, or Dr. Budd at jbudd@trumbullps.org.

What about live video chats with teachers and students?

TPS is currently not doing live video chats. This is mainly due to restrictions of FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) as well as the variety of family situations in which our students and teachers find themselves. There are some limited individual exceptions to this, such as certain one-on-one music lessons.

What should I expect for ongoing communication from TPS?

The weekly e-newsletters for parents will be specific to different grade levels: elementary, middle, and high. We will continue to keep our website updated and to send regular eBlasts to parents/guardians.

How about assessing students?

Our primary concern right now is the health and safety of everybody. Secondary to this is education, and at the moment, assessment in education is not our key priority. However, since the last day we were physically in school was the last day of Trimester 2 for grades K-8, the Trimester 2 report cards for those grades will be published during the week of March 30. The grades K-5 report cards will be mailed in regular first-class envelopes to parents/guardians, and the grades 6-8 report cards will be published electronically by the end of that week.

Anything new on the standardized assessment front regarding AP or any other assessments?

On regular standard assessments, such as Smarter Balanced or NGSS Assessments, we have about 98% certainty that they won't happen this year. The College Board is currently considering an extension date of when Examinations would be given and the possibility of having each test be taken in the home context. Although taking AP Exams is optional for our students, we will communicate details once we hear official advice from the College Board as well as from the State of Connecticut.

Anything else parents or guardians should remember?

Yesterday we served 500 meals at the front of THS. Remember, if you have a child who attends TPS, you can come to THS Monday through Friday between 10 and 12 to pick up lunch (and breakfast for the following day) for any child in your family who is 18 or younger. We also have had distribution of both grades 6-12 musical instruments and grades PreK-12 medication that was left in school nurses' offices. If you were unable to pick up your child's medication, please contact us on how that can be arranged.