

# *Southmoreland School District*



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*"High Quality Learning for All"*

March 25, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, Students and Community,

It is hoped that this letter finds you well and safe. These are unprecedented times in which we find ourselves, and the challenges we face in many aspects of our lives are unfamiliar and difficult. Among those many challenges is the issue of learning for our students. Much time, discussion and planning has gone into this question--how best to serve students and families--and no solution is perfect. Like many things we face in this period, we ask for your patience as we begin our distance learning strategy. We are learning, too.

Beginning March 30, 2020, students will begin distance learning opportunities. It should be made clear that distance learning is not simply online instruction. Distance learning means different paths for students to access instruction and new experiences. For our younger students in grades K-5, we believe that providing practice and experiential learning options is best. We will not concern ourselves with grading as we begin this process. We are more concerned with contact and sharing great resources for students to think and practice again. Similarly, at the secondary level, instructional opportunities will involve experiential learning but will be more focused on students learning new content that may be graded. Secondary teachers will be flexible as to how they will assign and grade material.

It is a reality that the district has limited technology to share with those families that are in need. It is asked that families request only one (1) Chromebook per household so as to ensure we can provide as many Chromebooks to families that need them as possible. The district will not be able to address households having a lack of internet accessibility. Chromebook serial numbers will be logged and parents will be required to sign for the Chromebooks as they pick them up through a process similar to what is occurring for our lunch distribution program. Students will be permitted to pick up Chromebooks at the HS at 1:00 PM on March 30, 2020. Chromebooks will only be distributed to families that have reached out to building level principals. A help desk will be established for those individuals having questions or concerns about Chromebooks and their usage. The email address for the help desk will be [helpdesk@southmoreland.net](mailto:helpdesk@southmoreland.net) and will be staffed by Mr. Smithula from 9:00 am - 3:30 pm Monday through Friday.

Our online component will be done through Google Classroom. All students have district emails that are first name and last name at southmoreland.net (for example, [joesmith@southmoreland.net](mailto:joesmith@southmoreland.net)). The student password is their lunch ID number unless it was previously changed by the student. Please log in to Google using that email and number to access your student's Google Classrooms. We recognize that for some, the lack of internet access is difficult. In those circumstances, we will be sending the same materials that we deliver online to our students through the mail. Students may return those learning items when the closure is lifted. Please be understanding that as we learn how to best serve our students in these new ways, we will be moving slowly and simply. In that way we can evaluate our work and make improvements as we go.

Please note that accurate information regarding this distance learning strategy will come solely from the Southmoreland School District through School Messenger, the District website and from official district email blasts. This is done to ensure clarity of action and to provide updates that are important and necessary.

Teachers have been asked to limit the amount of time that students will need to be working on their distance learning assignments. The last objective we should have is to make things more frustrating or difficult for students and parents. We will focus on essential learnings and experiential opportunities in the core subjects. Itinerant teachers will also be sharing activities for students to do at home. Our counselors will be making contact with students and families to offer support or connect resources. Together, we can, and we will, get through this and be stronger as a community as a result.

Sincerely yours,

Vincent Mascia, Superintendent