



## **Southmoreland Instructional Task Force FAQ**

### **How do I sign my child up for full time distance learning?**

Complete the Formal Virtual Learning Request Form, or call the building your child(ren) attends.

### **Can students switch once the year has started?**

Yes, K-12 students will have the opportunity to change their enrollment during the school year.

### **What are the fully online options for students?**

Students in grades K-12 will participate in the Southmoreland Online Learning Academy (SOLA). online learnK-8 online learning is led by a Southmoreland teacher. Each grade level will have one dedicated teacher to provide on-line instruction.

Students in grades 9-12 will be enrolled in SOLA through the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit's eAcademy courses. eAcademy courses can be made available for younger students at parent request.

### **How will the distance learning program be improved from last spring?**

All Southmoreland teachers were offered the opportunity to complete Google Level 1 Education Certification over the summer. Over 90 teachers have registered, and completion will take place prior to the start of school.

The Board has also approved amending the District Calendar to provide two additional in-service days prior to student arrival. These four total days will be used for teachers to participate in professional learning focused on utilizing virtual platforms, instructional framework, curriculum modifications and provide time to prepare content.

Expectations for teacher content will also provide greater continuity. Teachers will be asked to create more content while utilizing third-party content less. Additionally, with the alternating day models, teachers will be able to provide significant feedback.

### **Why was an alternating 6-day cycle selected over a 2-1-2 model or week on week off model?**

Other hybrid models being proposed left students anywhere from five to nine days without face-to-face instruction from their teacher. We believe that so much time away from instructional staff mitigated the impact of instruction. Seeing students every other day allows for quick feedback to students and the implementation of systematic interventions.

Additionally, having dedicated days per week presented a level of inequity for students who have instructional days on Mondays.

Finally, the blended A/B Model requires teachers to create asynchronous/independent work that students can complete at home. Our team felt it was more reasonable to ask teachers to assign related coursework for one day and then follow up with feedback, rather than ask teachers to create three or more days of asynchronous work.

### **How can teachers provide a full curriculum with one half of the school days being in person?**

Teachers are going to utilize Google Classroom as an instructional tool for students who are participating on alternating days. Teachers will create and share content that aligns with state standards and curriculum pacing. Students will be assigned asynchronous, teacher developed content that students can engage with on their “distance learning” days.

Activities that can be completed without teacher assistance, such as pre-reading text, watching an instructional video/demonstration, practice rote/repetitive skills, responding to writing prompts, etc. will be completed on “distance” days. During in person instructional days teachers will be able to dive deeper into the content, create opportunities for class discussions, assess student learning while providing feedback, complete project based learning activities and other higher order thinking tasks, etc.

### **What provisions will be made for students with special needs?**

Students who receive special education services will have the opportunity to attend school all five days. This is an IEP team decision and will be made closer to the August start date. For students with IEPs who plan on attending virtually, related service providers and case-managers will be able to provide support virtually.

### **Do eAcademy courses provide synchronous instruction?**

No, students enrolled in eAcademy courses participate in asynchronous instruction. The teacher assigned to each course is responsible for communicating, grading, and providing support for their roster.

### **Why should I choose SOLA over another cyber option?**

SOLA courses have been created by highly qualified instructors who are available to support your child during the school year. Many lessons are recorded so students can access lessons anytime. Charter cyber schools statistically underperform when compared to the Southmoreland School District and employ teachers who are not as qualified or experienced.

K-8 SOLA courses are taught by Southmoreland teachers utilizing our curriculum.

### **What is Flipped Learning?**

Flipped Learning is a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter.

Southmoreland is NOT becoming a “Flipped Learning School,” however we do believe that this framework offers solutions that can be applied to the hybrid model. We have scheduled professional development for our staff with a nationally recognized and ASCD published author to help our teachers build their capacity for what should be assigned for distance learning and how that can be connected with the core curriculum while maintaining pacing.

### **How will K-5 children have special classes (Art, Gym, STEM, Music, Computer, Library) on a 6 day cycle?**

Students will have special classes on a six day cycle, however the cycle will only count in-person days. So each in-person day your child will have a different special until they have cycled through all six specials.

### **How will we contact teachers with questions on remote learning days?**

On distance learning days teachers will provide assignments that are designed to be completed independently. These decisions will be made at the professional discretion of the teacher who will prioritize assigning tasks that can be completed independently. Clarifying questions can be asked the following in-person day, however emphasis will be placed on assigning content that does not require immediate teacher feedback.

### **Will teachers provide assignments prior to the start of the school year?**

No.

### **Will only my child’s teacher be posting virtual assignments?**

Each teacher will have their own Google Classroom. Your child will only be accessing the Google classroom of their assigned teacher.

### **What explicit guidelines is administration giving teachers regarding the virtual content?**

This is still being developed by the Instructional/Student Services Task Force. The initial framework is to task Professional Learning Communities to map their learning targets over a period of days and determine how to deliver standards aligned content - differentiating what needs to be completed with teacher supervision and what can be done independently. Finally, assessments will be utilized to verify mastery of the standard. **\*\*Units or Modules\*\***

### **Is it possible to livestream teacher lessons to students who are at home and participating in the A/B Model (not fully virtual)?**

That is currently not a consideration. Aside from technological limitations, running live lessons limits the ability for the teacher to interact with both groups of students and impacts the efficacy

of pacing when students are receiving different lessons in person and some being viewed online.

K-5 students who are participating fully online will have live synchronous lessons where teachers can provide live feedback and support to students utilizing Zoom or Google Meets.

**When will teachers plan for online learning days as well as in person days?**

The A/B model is intended to be continuous pacing that addresses learning targets aligned with PA Standards. Teachers will utilize PLC Team time and their regularly scheduled prep periods to develop lessons that address those standards. Everything will be facilitated through Google Classroom. This should not be dramatically different from the planning required for traditional, fully in-person instruction; the challenge will be determining what content needs to be done with the teacher present and what can be assigned independently.

**What other platforms have you looked into beside Google?**

We have chosen to focus our efforts in expanding our capacity to utilize the Google platform, called G Suite for Education. We believe that G Suite for Education offers the capacity to meet all of our student's needs.

**Have you discussed having in person instruction each day and secondary completing work virtually?**

The district does not have the number of elementary certified teachers to support that model and does not feel it equitably meets the needs of all students.

**How will virtual grading systems be handled?**

Students who are in grades K-5 will have an assigned teacher who is solely responsible for virtual instruction. This teacher will provide feedback through Google Classroom and virtual meeting platforms. Students will be graded based on the assigned tasks and sequenced learning targets, with grades updated and maintained in CSIU. SOLA students will have assigned teachers for each course that person will be responsible for grading.

**What about students who mastered learning targets already, what does enrichment look like?**

Following the PLC Model, teachers should be able to address the four essential questions for each learning target: (1) What do we want students to know? (2) How will we know they know it? (3) What do we do for those who have not mastered it? (4) What do we do for those who have mastered it?

Following those essential questions, teachers will develop lessons that meet the unique needs of each student.

**What training will students and families receive for accessing virtual content and using Google Classroom?**

This will be a significant focus for all teachers during the first 6 day cycle. Students will be explicitly taught how to access their Google Classroom and the features embedded in it. The District is also compiling/creating resources to share with parents to broaden their abilities to utilize the instructional tool.

**How will you provide intervention for students who are at home?**

We currently have products from 95% Group and Read Naturally; Both have created virtual intervention products that can be implemented remotely. On in-person days students will still receive the systematic intervention from a teacher