

Talbot County Public Schools: Continuity of Learning Plan

Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS) is committed to providing engaging learning experiences for all students during this extended closure of our schools. Over the past two weeks, TCPS staff have been developing a Continuity of Learning plan that will engage students in teacher support, remote learning. To promote greater access to these learning experiences, TCPS will implement a parallel delivery model that is both online and provided in printed format for those students who may not have access (or lack adequate, reliable access) to internet.

Initial Closure Period: March 16 – March 20

The afternoon of March 12, TCPS was notified during the Governor's press conference that schools would be closed for students and staff beginning March 16 – March 27. In response to this, TCPS prepared grade-level specific learning packets for both English Language Arts and Mathematics. These packets were distributed to students in PreK through Grade 8 prior to students leaving school on March 13. In addition, these materials for students in Grades 6-8 were posted on FROG, our student learning management system, as were ELA resources for students in Grades 9 and 10 and Algebra I materials. Many teachers also provided students with specific learning activities.

It is important to note that the priority focus in this phase was on implementing critical supports for our students and families. This included implementing the preparation and distribution of meals, collaborating with community partners for emergency child care, cleaning our school buildings, and mobilizing essential 12-month staff.

Initial Closure Period: March 23 – March 27, 2020

During this week, TCPS expanded its meal distribution sites and implemented an extended meal service.

TCPS Senior Leadership sought critical clarifications from the Maryland State Department of Education regarding expectations for Continuity of Learning in the event of an extended closure. Curriculum staff collaborated with state colleagues on resources and best practices. In addition, Curriculum staff:

- Identified critical standards,
- Assessed existing resources,
- Began to outline parameters for continuity of learning,
- Identified potential professional development needs.

Upon notification on March 25 of the decision for an extended closure, Curriculum took the lead in preparing additional learning packets to distribute to students on March 30. These resources were made available online on the TCPS Website, at meal distribution sites and on FROG for secondary students. During this phase, school administration was instrumental in providing feedback on initial planning of continuity of learning, providing valuable perspective on student and staff needs.

Preparing technology resources was a critical component of this period. The Instructional Technology team mobilized to prepare iPads for elementary students and worked with the Leadership Team to develop a plan for distribution. In addition, technology staff developed a plan for the use of hotspots to increase the availability of internet access for students.

Extended Closure: March 30 – April 3

Beginning Monday, March 30, all TCPS instructional staff engaged in virtual professional learning opportunities to prepare for continuity of learning. This included an overview of the TCPS plan for continuity of learning and specific professional development on the use of FROG and digital resources for remote learning. In addition, teachers engaged in virtual content/course planning opportunities. This included special education teachers and EL teachers. Teachers reached out to students and families to share plans for on-going communication, including establishing “office hours.” Teachers communicated with students who have incomplete work in quarter three to develop a plan to assist these students in meeting those requirements. School counselors and social workers were available to support students beginning in this phase of implementation. Special education staff began communicating and collaborating with parents to develop an Individualized Distance Learning Plan based on each student’s current IEP and services that are able to be provided during the period of extended school closure.

During this time, students were able to participate in continuity of learning by accessing activities on the TCPS website, completing packets available at food distribution locations, or on FROG for secondary students.

Extended Closure: April 6 – April 24

Beginning Monday, April 6, secondary teachers implemented ongoing continuity of learning experiences for all students assigned to their classes through our student learning management system, FROG. Students who do not have access to the internet will receive grade specific packets with activities aligned to key grade level standards in the core content areas.

Talbot County Public Schools will continue to review and revise our continuity of learning plan as we implement. It is our goal that our efforts for continuity of learning provide students with standards-based activities that sustain student learning despite and during this COVID-19 disruption to our normal teaching and learning program.