Making the Move to Distance Learning

Dear South Allegheny Family,

The Coronavirus pandemic has changed the way we live our lives in a very short period of time. For South Allegheny, it changed the way we educate our students significantly. For many of our students, the image on this page is how our classrooms look, this is how teachers, support staff, and students “see” one another and interact. However, we are making it work!

This newsletter provides you with a very small snapshot of everything we are doing as a school community to ensure the connections with our students and families are continuing, to ensure that basic needs are being met as best we can, and to ensure that the relationships our faculty and staff have with our students is continuing. The most important message in all of this is WE MISS YOU.

As this year begins to draw to a close, we are already planning for 20-21. Whether we begin the year with classes in our schools or with blended or remote learning, I am confident that our faculty and staff will deliver excellent instruction that builds the skills needed for our students to be successful.

We are thankful that our community and other stakeholders have been so incredibly supportive, patient, and understanding of the difficulties that the CODIV-19 pandemic has posed. We know and appreciate the fact that these same sentiments will continue as we navigate into uncharted territory, and we are confident that no matter the format of learning, our students will continue to receive the high-quality education they deserve.

Six months ago, we had never heard of COVID-19. Much has been learned since then, but we will be relying on the public health officials to learn even more before school begins again in August. We will also be relying on them to guide our decisions for how schools will look in the fall, and as soon as we can provide information to you, we will.

Stay safe and healthy,
Dr. Lisa N. Duval
Superintendent
We are Providing for Our Families and Communities!

Our Food Service and Facilities Management Company, Nutrition Inc., has provided meals for our students, beginning almost immediately after schools were closed, and continue to do so. Our students are provided seven breakfast and lunch meals during two distribution days per week.

Additionally, Eat N’ Park stepped in and began to provide dinner meals for not only our South Allegheny families, but also any community member who would want to take advantage of the service.

Finally, WQED provided book bags filled with school supplies for students, which were also distributed at the meal locations.

As of May 18, 2020, close to 40,000 meals have been provided for our students and communities.

We would like to thank each of these organizations for their commitment to the South Allegheny Community!

Your hard work is appreciated!!!

We are Having Fun!

Each South Allegheny Elementary student was mailed a “Flat Principal” and encouraged to take pictures of themselves with their Flat Principal and share them with us! Here are a few things that “Flat Mr. Michael and Flat Mrs. Vogel” have been spotted doing!
We Miss Our Students!

“April 8th, I stopped and dropped a package off for each of my students. It included snacks, a puzzle, a how to draw book, and a handwritten note.

I saw some of my students, from a safe distance. Not all were able to see me, due to being with other family at that time.

It truly was amazing. I miss those kids soooooo much.

Prior to this, I sent them all a card in the mail with a picture of us together.

I plan on doing another package in May.

I want them to know I love them and miss them so much.”

We Are Making Real World Connections!

“Our reading and history teachers in 8th grade have created a cross-curricular unit to teach our students about the 1918 Spanish Flu and the similarities and differences to the Coronavirus, supported with both historical documents, such as poetry written in 1918, and informational text, proving to students that these are not "uncharted waters" or "unprecedented times."

Our own Glassport High School was closed for 90 days during the 1918-1919 school year to "flatten the curve" of the Spanish Flu and the football team only played 2 games that season before the school closed!”

We are Creating and Being Creative!

Students were asked to create a color wheel using items found in their homes!

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We are Connecting with Students in New Ways!

“Elementary Students are using an app called flipgrid for their physical education classes. This is a platform where our students can video themselves exercising. I also post ideas for our students to get exercise. I am so proud of the work that our SAE students have been doing in promoting a heart healthy lifestyle through exercise. It is also a great way for me to see our students exercising and a way they can connect with their classmates.”

“Because of this situation, I have been able to spend time with kids more individually to help them with their scholarship essays. They are currently writing argumentative research papers for class so between the two, their writing is getting a lot of specific, individualized help. This never could’ve happened in a class of 34 kids, but now, we are working in more of a “writing lab” type of atmosphere. ”

“I post a daily lesson for my first graders and some students send video work back to me for reading and language. It is a joy to watch. It shows their true charisma and growth! The families have been patient and delightful with the video support.”

“The Girls’ Head Varsity Soccer Coach is holding voluntary Webex Workouts for the team every Tuesday and Thursday evening”

“At the time of the school closure, I was wrapping up a unit of study on cells and cell processes. I had been getting the students excited for the upcoming unit on matter and its interactions. This upcoming unit would lend itself to a lot of experiments and hands-on activities in class...I promised them that I was saving the best for last! Sadly, that didn’t happen...

So, I created a YouTube channel and enlisted my own children as my students!

In addition to having Julia and Jake do the experiments, I was very worried about the students learning the content behind the experiments. I know that many of my students cannot simply read and comprehend these sometimes difficult science topics...they need to be taught, but I can’t be there with them explaining the text...or could I?? Back to YouTube and my new favorite resource, Screencastify, where I have learned how to talk over a slide and/or video and explain the content...just like when we were in class together!

I had to overcome my fear and insecurities of recording myself, but it seems to be benefitting the students and I am receiving a lot of positive feedback! It's not perfect but I am learning something new and discovering new resources all the time!”

“The assignment for high school band class last week was for the students to practice, record, and post a video recording of themselves playing our school's Alma Mater. They had to play to a click track to be sure that everybody was at the exact tempo. From there, I took everybody's audio and mixed it into one single track and put all of their videos together on one screen using video editing software I found online. One thing that was said quite often by the students was they certainly miss playing together as a band. “

The performance can be found on the SA BAND Facebook page!
We are Still Learning Foreign Languages!

"This is an assignment completed on day 2 of Exploratory Spanish. I'm particularly proud of the student's work on activities 3 and 5, where the students worked with complete sentences. In 3 they showed comprehension with images, and in 5 they wrote their own sentences!"

We are Still Learning as Educators!

"I know a lot of us are taking advantage of online courses to enhance our distance learning through the AIU too! I'm "zooming to one" right now but had we not been in this quarantine, a lot of us may not have known about these learning opportunities! Definitely helping our Google Classrooms and such!"

"Back in 1993, when South Allegheny hired me, I was excited when I walked into my classroom and I had my very own Thermofax and ditto machine. I could make my own copies in my own room. Woo Hoo! Although, at the time, those were becoming extinct, we were still using them.

Now, jump ahead 27 years, I am now excited to say that I am, through AIU remote learning, self learning and trial and error, able to meet with a student through zoom for a mini lesson while sharing the screen so that she can view my google slides presentation. WOW! How much teaching has changed!!! Oh wait ...How much teaching has changed in 6 weeks!!"
Pandemic Poetry by 8th Grade

In light of hitting on current events and practicing cross-curricular types of work, science class students looked at the Coronavirus and expressed their own thoughts and feelings through a psychologically scientific approach of poetry. Below is only a snapshot of all the incredible poems our Gladiators wrote.

#SAProud

Stay at home safe and sound
And coronavirus won't spread around.
The economy is starting to crumble
So football player won't be able to make a fumble
It's a wicked virus that started from a bat
Now we have to social distance so we can make the curve flat
Vacations are canceled and so is school too
I wish this would end so we could have fun
But until then there will be none
-Kaedan

I begin to lay down
I do this without a frown
I am not glad
I am not sad
I am simply bored
But I remain assured
That this will all be over soon
-Abby

People praying to be together
Aging people are at risk
Nurses and doctors working around the clock to save lives
Dying without your family to hold your hand
Early mornings watching news for possible changes
Masks are used and worn everywhere
Is this going to be over soon
Crying for the lives lost
-Jacob

Positivity
If we stay positive during these times
The virus will stop its grow
The government is giving us signs
that we need to take things slow
Stay happy and healthy and we will hear the chimes
Positivity is just a leap away all we have to do is take the climb
-Laila

Clean your hands
Outbreak across the world
Respect the first responders
Overcome the virus
New cases everyday
All in this together
Vaccine will be found
In all countries
Recoveries happening everywhere
Updates everyday on news
Slow the spread
-Morgan

I think of all the essential workers, so brave and strong.
While they work together we hope nothing more will go wrong.
If we continue to stay 6 feet apart, we can get rid of the coronavirus!
-Katelyn

The current situation may be a little scary
And the outside world may make people feel quite wary
Despite the fear spreading across
We will eventually rise up and soar like an albatross
When there are hardships we still stand tall
And eventually we will get through it all
All we have to do is hope and stay safe...
-Suha

Weeks and weeks of isolation,
But we still have determination.
Keep the germs away,
Is what they say.
While we are stuck at home,
Lonely and all alone.
Waiting for everything to be normal again.
Days pass by,
In the blink of an eye.
Without anything to do,
Except wanting to see you.
But we can not,
Even though I miss you a lot.
But I will see you soon after the virus is no more.
-Lily

While we sit inside, isolated all day
We all wish this horrible virus will go away.
While we wear where our masks and wash our hands with water and soap.
Doing these simple things can make this go away and that gives us hope.

I begin to lay down
Do this without a frown
I am not glad
I am not sad
I am simply bored
But I remain assured
That this will all be over soon
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