



Port Washington School District

Board of Education Meeting: March 31, 2020 Responses to Community Questions/Comments

- Question #1:** Who can I contact regarding continuity of services, including speech/language or special education services?
Answer: If you know your child's speech/language pathologist, it is best to contact them directly. Otherwise, please contact Dr. Stephanie Allen at sallen@portnet.org.
- Question #2:** What is the plan for children who receive support in reading?
Answer: Teachers who provide literacy/reading support to students are doing so remotely. If you have specific questions about your child, please contact their reading teacher via email.
- Question #3:** Is it true that teachers in other/surrounding districts are providing more time for online instruction?
Answer: The information from administrators in our neighboring districts and others is that at present, their teachers are not delivering more direct instruction than the minimum requirements in our Phase II plan. In fact, some of our neighbors are not providing any live video distance learning because their bargaining units have privacy concerns that will not permit it.
- Question #4:** Can teachers be provided with professional development on project-based learning using technology as a tool?
Answer: The district is currently providing virtual professional development sessions to assist teachers in remote/distance teaching and learning. Some teachers were trained in project-based learning prior to this pandemic, and the district will continue to explore this approach. However, it is important to keep in mind that teachers are currently focused on providing their students with the best possible education they can, given the current circumstances regardless of whether they are using a project-based approach or not. Also keep in mind that many of our teachers are already experienced with this teaching method.

Question #5: Will the Port Washington Board of Education consider a weekly meeting?
Answer: We are very aware of our responsibilities and are committed to keeping the community informed during this unprecedented crisis. We are continually evaluating the best ways to accomplish this.

Question #6: You have done a great job of distributing Chromebooks to families. How can we engage Spanish speaking families to learn the technology so they can work with their children, especially at elementary school?
Answer: One of our primary goals was to ensure that every one of our families was able to have their child(ren) engage in online learning. As a result, Chromebooks were distributed to households with one or more students who did not have a personal device in their homes. That process is continuing. With respect to Spanish-speaking families who may not have been familiar with the provided technology, there has been ongoing contact with them by the district's Director of English as a New Language (ENL) Shirley Cepero, as well as by their child(ren)'s ENL teacher(s) to assist them with the technology and remote learning. In addition, resources that offer tutorials on the use of technology are being shared with these families. We understand that families who had one or even two or more devices before the crisis, allocating screen time between their children's needs and the parents/guardians' work and other needs, is very challenging. In fact, this is one of the reasons required sign-in times and instructional requirements in real time is not feasible for many students. Currently, we do not have plans to distribute Chromebooks to students who have at least one device in their home.

Question #7: Can students who still have binders or books at school pick them up?
Answer: Due to concerns about the health and safety of students, families and staff members, we are unable to allow students to retrieve their personal items from the buildings.

Question #8: How does the district plan on supporting 11th graders as they are in a pivotal time in their high school career as they contemplate college.
Answer: Guidance counselors, like all other support area staff are still working during this pandemic. Please reach out to your child(ren)'s counselor(s) with specific questions regarding the college application process. You can also contact Director of Guidance Kitty Klein-Rabinovich at kklein-rabinovich@portnet.org

Question #9: How will any changes affect high school juniors as they think about college admissions?
Answer: We expect to receive more information from institutions of higher education later concerning this. However, we do not believe that students will be penalized due to this pandemic.

Question #10:

Answer:

Is it possible that school would need to carry over into summer?
We do not yet know whether there will be a directive from Governor Cuomo regarding the summer months. However, the district hopes to offer its regional summer program that has been offered in the past

Question #11:

Answer:

If the Board of Education is not satisfied with the minimum amount of time teachers are required to instruct students, why do you not increase this time?

The district's professional educators design and implement curriculum, not the Board of Education. The crisis does not change that process. The Board of Education did not vote on the Phase I or Phase II plans. Like any governing body there are differing opinions among the seven of us, but we are all in agreement with the superintendent who made it clear at the meeting that the amount of direct teacher interaction prescribed for each grade in the Phase II plan is a minimum guideline and that the plan itself will be evolving as the crisis continues. Please also refer to the district's Continuity of Learning Plan that will address this and many other questions.

<https://www.portnet.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=17801&dataid=28417&FileName=v5%20Continuity%20of%20Instruction%20Guidance%20Document.pdf>

Question #12:

Answer:

Will there be teacher-wide guidance on the number of hours, proportion of live versus recorded learning, etc. or is it left to each teachers' discretion. Please also refer to the district's Continuity of Learning Plan that will address this and many other questions.

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Question #13:

Answer:

Where do I voice complaints about non-compliance?

The pre-pandemic chain of command remains in effect. The district designed the Phase II plan in conjunction with administrators and teachers, and it is the Board's expectation that every teacher/support staff member will follow its guidelines. If concerns arise, parents are directed to contact the teacher first with their inquiry. If the problem is not resolved, the next step is to contact the building principal (or student's assistant principal for Weber and Schreiber).

Question #14: From a student's perspective, we love seeing/ hearing our teachers and peers. However, we were told that we cannot have cameras/microphones on. Will this continue as we value seeing our teachers?

Answer: When teachers are providing live instruction, we ask that you do not record or photograph them due to privacy concerns. Please also refer to the district's Continuity of Learning Plan for additional guidance on this topic.

<https://www.portnet.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=17801&dataid=28417&FileName=v5%20Continuity%20of%20Instruction%20Guidance%20Document.pdf>

Question #15: At the very least, I would expect that we would meet the state's daily Minimum. Is this the case?

Answer: Both Phase I and Phase II plans are well within the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) requirements set during this pandemic.

Question #16: For students in grades K-2, will you consider adjusting the curriculums for September if this persists to the end of the school year?

Answer: Depending on the duration of this pandemic and the directions from NYSED, the 2020-21 curriculum may be adjusted.