



WissNation – Family Update #4

A Focus on Teaching & Learning

April 2, 2020

Hello, Wissahickon Parents/Guardians,

This past week has been filled with all kinds of learning. Our students are engaged in their *At Home Learning Plans*. Our teachers are learning more about the district-supported tech tools needed to further extend our instruction remotely. Additionally, our teachers, principals, and district leaders are hearing from our families – what’s working and what improvements might prove helpful. As we plan for the continuation of remote teaching and learning the week of April 13 (following Spring Recess), I want to assure you that this week’s experience has served to inform our plans moving forward. One of the messages we heard loud and clear was, “Keep it simple.” Again, we heard you and will do our best to make this manageable for all.

Officially, the Wissahickon School District is on Spring Recess next week for both students and teachers. For this reason, the *At Home Learning Plan* for Week 2 will be optional for students. I will say, however, that there is a wide range of engaging learning experiences contained in those plans. Your child may want to complete them, and that would be great. Again, however, the Week 2 AHL Plan is not required.

On the following pages, I explain how remote teaching and learning will look upon return to school on Monday, April 13, organized by level (elementary, middle, and high). I also wanted to share with you our modified grading plan for the final marking period of the 2019-2020 school year. In light of the extended school closure and the challenges associated with teaching and learning from a remote location, we have modified our usual grading procedures. This grading plan can be found on the last page of this update.

In the event that you need further clarification after reading this update, you are encouraged to contact your child’s teacher(s).

In the meantime, make sure that your family stays healthy and remains safe.

Regards,



Dr. Gary W. Abbamont
Assistant Superintendent of Schools
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Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002



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Elementary School *At Home* Learning Beginning April 13

- ✓ Lessons will now be provided on a daily basis, not a week of work at a time.
- ✓ The Classroom Teacher will send parents an e-mail that includes a visual overview of the next day's lessons on or before 6 PM the night before. This will provide parents the opportunity to plan for their child's schedule the following day. (Note: Teachers may post their lessons earlier than 4/12 for their lessons on 4/13.) This is the information that will be included in the e-mail:

Content Area	Activity	Product	Resources	My Office Hours
ELA-Reading				
ELA-Writing				
Mathematics				
Science or SS				
Today's Encore Class is				

- ✓ The Classroom Teacher will also have the next day's lessons available by 6 PM the night before in the event that the child(ren) would like to get a start on their lessons at a time when parents might be more available to assist them.
- ✓ Some student work will be collected by the teacher. Teachers will review the work and provide feedback and guidance to advance student learning.
- ✓ The daily schedule will include lessons in the four core academic areas listed above (Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science or Social Studies) as well as one Encore class. The Encore classes will follow this schedule:
 - ♦ Monday is Art.
 - ♦ Tuesday is General Music.
 - ♦ Wednesday is Library or S.T.E.M.
 - ♦ Thursday is Health and Physical Education.
 - ♦ Friday is Guidance.
- ✓ For students taking a strings or band instrument this year, Wednesday is the day for lessons. The Instrumental Music teachers will post weekly lessons for each of their lesson groups every Wednesday. Students will have the flexibility to view the lesson and practice the skills at a time that works best.
- ✓ The teachers will post their "office hours" daily so that you know the best time to e-mail and/or set a time to discuss a concern or question. Teachers are setting time aside in both the morning and afternoon for such communications.
- ✓ Our Reading and ESL specialists will contact families directly with the lessons that they have prepared for their students.



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Middle School *At Home* Learning Beginning April 13

- ✓ Lessons will now be provided on a daily basis, not a week of work at a time.
- ✓ The Middle School Teachers will send a Schoology Message to students and parents on or before 6 PM the night before. The message will students and parents know the lessons that have been assigned for the following day. Additionally, the lessons will be available for review, and students can begin working on them in the evening when support is more readily available. (Note: Teachers may post their lessons earlier than 4/12 for their lessons on 4/13.)
- ✓ Some student work will be collected by the teacher. Teachers will review the work and provide feedback and guidance to advance student learning.
- ✓ The teachers will post their “office hours” daily so that you know the best time to e-mail and/or set a time to discuss a concern or question. Teachers are setting time aside in both the morning and afternoon for such communications.
- ✓ The Middle School Teachers will operate on an alternating day schedule. Monday, April 13, will be a BLUE day. Tuesday, April 14, will be a GOLD day. Although the student has 8 classes on a usual school day, this schedule has students focusing on 4 classes on one day, and 4 classes the next day.

Aspect of the Day	Wissahickon Middle School
By 6 PM or Earlier the Evening Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Day’s Lessons Are Live & Ready to Go • Teacher Posts AM and PM Office Hours for the Week by Monday Morning
Blue Day’s Lessons Monday, April 13 is a Blue Day!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English-Language Arts (50 Minutes) • Social Studies (50 Minutes) • Health and Physical Education (50 Minutes) • Unified Arts (50 Minutes) • WMS Band & Strings Time Slots: (30 Minutes)
By 6 PM or Earlier the Evening Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Day’s Lessons Are Live & Ready to Go • Teacher Posts AM and PM Office Hours for the Week by Monday Morning
Gold Day’s Lessons Tuesday, April 14 is a Gold Day! (and so on)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics (50 Minutes) • Science (50 Minutes) • Health and Physical Education (50 Minutes) • World Language (50 Minutes) • WMS Band & Strings Time Slots: (30 Minutes)

“Inspire, Engage, Excel”



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High School *At Home* Learning Beginning April 13

- ✓ Lessons will now be provided on a daily basis, not a week of work at a time.
- ✓ The High School Teachers will send a Schoology Message to students and parents on or before 6 PM the night before. The message will students and parents know the lessons that have been assigned for the following day. Additionally, the lessons will be available for review, and students can begin working on them in the evening when support is more readily available. (Note: Teachers may post their lessons earlier than 4/12 for their lessons on 4/13.)
- ✓ Some student work will be collected by the teacher. Teachers will review the work and provide feedback and guidance to advance student learning.
- ✓ The teachers will post their “office hours” daily so that you know the best time to e-mail and/or set a time to discuss a concern or question. Teachers are setting time aside in both the morning and afternoon for such communications.
- ✓ The High School Teachers will operate on an alternating day schedule. Monday, April 13, will be a BLUE day. Tuesday, April 14, will be a GOLD day. Although the student has 8 classes on a usual school day, this schedule has students focusing on 4 classes on one day, and 4 classes the next day.

Aspect of the Day	Wissahickon High School
By 6 PM or Earlier the Evening Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Day’s Lessons Are Live & Ready to Go • Teacher Posts AM and PM Office Hours for the Week by Monday Morning
Blue Day’s Lessons Monday, April 13 is a Blue Day!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course 1 (50 Minutes) • Course 2 (50 Minutes) • Course 3 (50 Minutes) • Course 4 (50 Minutes) • AM NMTCC Complete NMTCC Work on Blue Days (30 Minutes)
By 6 PM or Earlier the Evening Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Day’s Lessons Are Live & Ready to Go • Teacher Posts AM and PM Office Hours for the Week by Monday Morning
Gold Day’s Lessons Tuesday, April 14 is a Gold Day! (and so on)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course 5 (50 Minutes) • Course 6 (50 Minutes) • Course 7 (50 Minutes) • Course 8 (50 Minutes) • PM NMTCC Complete NMTCC Work on Gold Days (30 Minutes)



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Some Additional Points Regarding At Home Learning

- ✓ The work has been designed asynchronously (not a live interaction with the teacher) so that students can complete the work flexibly during the day. Students can do some in the morning, some in the afternoon, and some in the evening. Given the current circumstances, we wanted to be sure that families had as much flexibility as possible when scheduling their child's day. We do have plans to introduce some synchronous instruction, and I will keep you informed on that front.
- ✓ Work has been planned so that students are working for about 3-4 hours a day. Again, students can work on some of this early in the day, some in the afternoon, and even some in the evening. We understand that parents/guardians are likely also working from home, and so if your child needs some support, you might have the child complete that task when you are available to assist.
- ✓ Teachers are available to discuss and support students with their work. If there is a need to better understand an assignment or how best to help your child with an assignment, you are encouraged to e-mail your child's teacher. If necessary, the teacher will plan for mutually convenient time to have a phone conversation with the parent or with the parent and student if additional support is necessary. They are eager to do so. Teachers will be available by e-mail during the school's normal work hours.

♦ Blue Bell Elementary School	7:55-3:25
♦ Lower Gwynedd Elementary School	7:50-3:20
♦ Shady Grove Elementary School	7:50-3:20
♦ Stony Creek Elementary School	7:55-3:25
♦ Wissahickon Middle School	7:25-2:55
♦ Wissahickon High School	7:30-3:00



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The Wissahickon Grading Plan for the Final Reporting Period of the 2019-2020 School Year

In the midst of this unprecedented school closure due to COVID-19, all of us in the educational community – students, parents, and educators– have been challenged to adapt to new ways of teaching and learning. In the traditional classroom, we are positioned to check for student understanding, adjust instruction, differentiate lessons, and ensure that each student’s learning is supported as necessary. In spite of our best efforts, the environment we are in currently makes it more challenging for the teacher to assess student learning with the same confidence as happens in the classroom. In light of the circumstances and the challenges presented in teaching and learning remotely, we have adjusted our grading protocols as indicated below. We are confident that this approach will allow students and teachers to make learning the primary focus and reduce any stress levels that students and families may be experiencing due to the current COVID-19 crisis.

Elementary Schools

- For our K-5 students, the schools will issue a modified third trimester report card. Teachers will be focused on the more essential Pennsylvania standards and limit their assessment to those specific standards. Non-assessed standards will be grayed out for the third trimester. The “Qualities of a Learner” section of the report card will not be rated.
- Teachers will continue to assign, collect, and review work; they will provide students with both feedback and guidance on work collected.

Middle School

- For our 6-8 students, the school will issue a modified fourth quarter report card. For all courses, students will receive either a “Pass” or “Fail” grade based on their participation in the learning process and their completion of work.
- Teachers will continue to assign work, review and assess the work, and provide feedback and guidance to advance student learning.

High School

- For our 9-12 students, the school will issue a fourth quarter report card modified as follows. Final exams will be waived. Midterm exams will count for 10% of the end-of-year grade, and each of the four marking periods will be weighted 22.5%.
- While the final exams have been waived, teachers will administer common assessments in those instances where multiple teachers instruct the same course. The common assessments will reflect the essential skills and content addressed during the fourth marking period.
- Teachers will continue to assign work, review and assess the work, and provide feedback and guidance to advance student learning. Second chance learning opportunities will continue just as they would have been if we were “in school.”

As we continue teaching and learning in remote locations, our teachers are focused on the mastery of essential skills, those that provide a strong foundation for future learning. Between now and the end of 2019-2020 school year, our teachers will engage students in the teaching and learning cycle – instruction, application/practice, assessment of student work, and feedback – in an effort to work toward student mastery of the essential skills.