



# SPMS 2nd Quarter Update



This communication is to serve as an educational update as we move forward into our second grading period. Students enrolled in the FLEX learning track will remain in the hybrid model to begin the new quarter. Students enrolled in the CYBER track will remain in that model through at least the end of the semester.

Throughout the last few months, teachers, administrators and district staff have been listening to concerns, collecting data, assessing student performance, and meeting to make plans moving forward. In response to both parent and classroom teacher concerns, we will be employing strategies to improve the educational experience your middle school students receive. It is important to remember there is not a “one size fits all approach” and if your child is continuing to experience challenges, I urge you to reach out directly to the classroom teacher as your first point of contact. Our teachers can offer clarification and support in response to your concerns and quickly remedy a stressful situation.

Primary concerns of families consisted of excessive screen time, technology challenges, amount of work assigned for at home learning days, and lack of guidance or support for the learning activities at home. The primary classroom concerns needing to be addressed include the instances of disengagement on at-home learning days, student technology issues impeding the progress of independent work at home, and the minimal number of students taking advantage of virtual office hours being offered by the classroom teachers.

Departments have met and come up with strategies to address the primary concerns. Classroom teachers will be maximizing in-person instruction days in order to address NEW learning content. The independent practice assigned for home will be what was typically assigned as “classwork practice”. These assignments will be supplemented with video support, screencastify segments, and/or highlights to review the content learned while the student participated in live class. A cyber student will also benefit from this additional supplement on the days they are not meeting live with their respective subject area teacher.

The “flipped classroom” approach may be utilized from time to time in different content areas. By design, the student will complete “pre-work” on their own at home in preparation for the “deeper dive” into content when the students gather as a group with the teacher. Flipped classrooms allow for more collaboration time when the class is together, provide one-on-one opportunities for the student and teacher, and offer flexibility for the student to go back and review material at their own pace rather than feel forced to keep up with what can seem like an overwhelming task of traditional note-taking.

Additional support is available through virtual office hours DAILY (including Fridays). There is a specific time allotted each day for the four core subject teachers (ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies) to be available to support students while they are completing work at home. These schedules are posted in Canvas and we cannot encourage students enough to take advantage of this outreach. Students should simply send a message to the appropriate teacher in order to request time.

Because of the nature of the calendar throughout the months of November and December with holidays and breaks, some teachers may periodically find it beneficial to have hybrid/cyber students “attend” class virtually through live streaming of a presentation, activity, or lesson. These circumstances and expectations will be communicated by the teacher. We continue to emphasize the importance of students checking email DAILY so that they don't miss out on these opportunities.

The Department of Education has approved at-home learning days to count toward our 180-day requirement and we expect students to complete the work assigned and login for attendance. Part II of this update will be sent tomorrow and includes a summary of attendance expectations for both hybrid and cyber students. Please review this carefully, as attendance procedures have been a district-wide concern at all building levels. As always, I encourage you to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Lynn Como, Middle School Principal