

Dear Families of SPEC,

What an interesting start to the school year. Between physical distancing and kids wearing face coverings, it's been a strange beginning to say the least. The good news is that I am sure everyone from now on will be able to estimate 6 feet. I hope that is a question on a test someday!

Throughout the first 45 days of school, we have been listening to concerns and monitoring progress in order to make important changes to how the school operates both physically, virtually and academically. Below is a review of some practices as well as some changes to the academics in SPEC.

1. Attendance

Attendance has been difficult with the virtual days. The state has certain rules and guidelines that must be met and that can be tricky with virtual learning. Let's review the process.

- A. Students must be signed in by 9:10am to be marked as present for the day.
- B. The attendance button can be found on the Canvas platform of each teacher.
- C. Once on the canvas platform, every teacher has an attendance button. Click that button.
- D. You will be redirected to the Google form used to take attendance. Please fill out the form in its entirety.
- E. The teachers are going to be, once again, reviewing these steps with each child so they should all be able to sign in for attendance independently.
- F. For those who sign in their children, you can sign in for attendance early as long as it is before 9:10am.

2. Grades and Report cards

Assignments, tests and quizzes, oh my! The new report card that will come out of Powerschool will be great. Please be patient with us as we learn how to report everything to the best of our ability. This first nine weeks, we created a 5 point participation classwork grade for those virtual days. We hoped it would motivate the students to participate in virtual days. Those points will only be up to 20% of the total grade. When the students are home and working through their virtual days, please do whatever you can to keep them going. It's hard but we need your help.

3. Academic changes for the 2nd nine weeks

Each team of teachers is trying some new features to enhance the academics for our SPEC students. Below you will see a list of those changes by grade level.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is planning to do a weekly video on different story elements and comprehension skills. Each teacher will take a turn creating and running these lessons.

First Grade

First grade is going to divide their students into three ability levels based on their STAR 360 scores, first nine weeks grades, and teacher observations. This will be done for ELA and math. Each teacher on our team along with Title I will provide one posted lesson a week directed to meet the students at their level and provide needed reinforcement and enrichment. This plan will provide each student with additional content in ELA and math.

Second Grade

In addition to the Screencastify introducing the weekly vocabulary words and genre, the 2nd Grade Team will be creating one additional Screencastify for ELA. In Math we will be adding one additional content lesson per week via Screencastify and the day of the week will vary. Students always have the opportunity to enrich or remediate using their online textbook features in reading and math. For ELA, students may access read alouds to assist with fluency and comprehension.

Third Grade

Each teacher will record a "new skill" via a Screencastify video. The video will be uploaded to the students' Canvas class on the "At-Home" day for that week (Fridays or adjusted week scheduled days). Each teacher will also accompany that video with a scheduled ZOOM Meeting that usually occurs on that day. During the ZOOM Meeting, the teacher will be able to answer questions, review, and remediate, if needed.

Fourth Grade

In 4th grade, teachers will video a new lesson a week on the topics of Open Ended Math problems and in ELA they will address writing topics (TDA's and other forms of writing). We will take students step by step through these types of problems and writing tasks. This will be in addition to the lessons that we already address. We also want to emphasize to the students that we are available on Fridays to answer any questions, concerns, and extra help.

Learning Support

Grade 1 Learning Support: 2 additional ELA recorded lessons

Grade 2 Learning Support: 1 additional ELA recorded lesson

Grade 3 Learning Support: 1 additional Math live streamed lesson; live small group review session every Friday

Grade 3 Learning Support: live stream Foundations lessons every Friday

Grade 4 Learning Support Pull-Out Groups: 1 additional live streamed and recorded ELA lesson with additional live small group review every Friday AND 1 additional recorded Math lesson, with office hours/small group review every Friday

Times for Small Groups and Office Hours will be communicated through your child's teacher

Specials

Specials will be using ScreenCastify or upload videos of lessons. These will be extra visual enhancement at the appropriate grade level. The focus of the videos will be tutorial and review of lessons as well as enrichment activities.

The teachers have been working so hard during the start of the year. As both an educator and a parent in this district, I feel so blessed to have such a great group working with our children. Let's continue to work together to make this year a great one for the students of SPEC.

Sincerely,
Rob Furman