



# Anchorage School District

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## Education Center

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd. • Anchorage, AK 99504 • 907-742-4000 • [www.asdk12.org](http://www.asdk12.org)

March 30, 2020

Greetings ASD Families:

First and foremost, I'd like to start by wishing your family well as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have swept across our world and into Alaska. The goal of the Anchorage School District (ASD) through this period of uncertainty is to continue to educate our students while recognizing the need to balance education with many other daily necessities. We know there are family stressors you may be feeling and other priorities you may need to attend to while your students are at home. As Superintendent Dr. Bishop indicated in her Friday message to families, our commitment is to partner with you and your children to work through this uncharted territory as a team.

Over the past two weeks, educators from all parts of the ASD have been busy planning for our transition to digital learning. They have also been working hard to stay in touch with students. The launch into this new online educational experience will be a transition for us all: students, families and educators. With that in mind, I want to thank you for your patience and understanding as we roll things out. There will undoubtedly be frustrations along the way; however, with a deep breath and the knowledge that we are all embarking on a new educational path, I know we can do it well together!

This letter will outline three important components:

1. Digital Learning Plan for Middle & High Schools
2. Schedule for this Week
3. Tips for Parents & Students at Home

## 1. Digital Learning Plan for High School & Middle School

Online learning begins for students Tuesday, March 31. The transition to digital learning for students will be done through a tiered roll-out approach. At both high school and middle school, we will focus on core subjects first, then phase in electives at a later date. We want to ease the full transition into a digital learning environment, recognizing that learning through online delivery differs significantly from face-to-face instruction and will take everyone--students and staff alike--a period of time to adjust successfully. Students will access content primarily through the Canvas digital platform (math and language arts at the middle level will be delivered through the APEX learning management system). Here is a more detailed timetable of the tiered roll-out by level:

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*Educating All Students for Success in Life*

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## **High School Timetable:**

- March 31 Launch digital content through Canvas for the four core content areas: ELA, Social Studies, Math, and Science
- April 13 Launch digital content through Canvas for elective courses
- May 21 Last day for all students, including seniors
- May 26 Begin four week extension via Summer School - only for students who need additional time to complete courses to earn credit

## **Middle School Timetable:**

- March 31
- Launch digital content through APEX for Math and English/LA (6-8)
  - Non-math/LA teachers support students and families
- April 6
- Launch supplemental digital content through Canvas for Social Studies and Science
  - Non-core subject teachers continue with student/family support
- April 13
- Core teachers continue their efforts in APEX and Canvas
  - Elective and CTE teachers launch digital supplemental content through Canvas for students

## **When Will We Go Back to Regular Instruction?**

While the Governor's current statewide school closure is only scheduled through May 1, we have prepared digital content for 4th Quarter for all our students in the event the closure is extended through the end of the school year. If we are able to return students to classrooms this year, we will send families an update with detailed information for when and how that transition will take place.

## **Can Seniors Still Graduate This Year?**

ASD is especially committed to assisting our seniors with earning all of the credits they need to graduate. The last day for seniors has been extended from May 8 to May 21, the last day for all other ASD students, in order to provide them more time to successfully complete their classes online. Counselors have begun contacting seniors by phone to confirm what credits they need to graduate and to allow them to drop any classes they may not need, without penalty, so they can focus their attention on those they do need to graduate. Please note that seniors are invited to continue all of their current classes if they wish to do so.

## **Will My Online Classes Be Graded?**

High school students will continue to receive feedback and scores on assignments they complete online for all their classes. A final grade will be issued at the end of the semester for each class. These semester grades will include both a student's 3rd quarter and 4th quarter progress, just as they would normally. Grades and credits will be posted to a student's high school transcript just as they would normally as well.

Middle school students will receive feedback and scores on assignments they complete online. Students will not receive a 4th quarter grade for their online classes. No grade will be posted to a student's transcript for 4th quarter. Teachers and counselors will work with students and families to balance content for students at the middle school level. This could mean that some students focus on just Math and Language Arts while other students focus on more classes beyond these.

## 2. Schedule for the Week

### How Do Students Get Started?

We recognize students unfamiliar with online learning will need a lot of support from their teachers during this transition. To start our digital learning transition, we have developed an orientation schedule for Tuesday, March 31 and Wednesday, April 1. **You will receive an email with a link to an online Zoom session from each teacher separately.** Both students and parents are invited to join these Zoom sessions with their teachers and become familiar with the new learning format. Each teacher will host two sessions. Both sessions will cover the same content. Students and parents may attend either session.

Time	Tuesday, March 31	Wednesday, April 1
9–10:30 a.m.	Math	Language Arts
10:30–12:00 p.m.	Social Studies	Science & King Tech CTE
12–1:30 p.m.	Science & King Tech CTE	Social Studies
1:30–3:p.m.	Language Arts	Math

Middle and High School Online Orientation Days –  
Students Can Attend Either Session for Each Content Area

*\*Please note that some schools will be offering a modified schedule to meet their individual needs. If this is the case at your student’s school, you will receive notification highlighting the revised schedule.*

### How Will Students Get On-going Support?

To help students stay connected with their teachers after the orientation days, we have developed a weekly schedule of office hours for all content areas. Teachers will host office hours via Zoom sessions for their students according to the schedule below so every student knows when he or she can connect with a teacher to ask questions and get support. Students are not required to attend these sessions because we know many students will share one device amongst several siblings each day. No new content will be delivered during these sessions. Students can attend the whole session or just stay long enough to get the help they need. As students settle into an online learning routine, we highly encourage students to attend office hours regularly as a way to stay connected with their teachers and classmates.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8–9 a.m.	Additional Tutoring Sessions for Sped, ELL, Tier II & III				
9–10 a.m.	World Language	P.E./JROTC	World Language	P.E./JROTC	World Language
10–11 a.m.	Math	HS General Elective	Math	HS General Elective	Math
11 a.m.–12 p.m.	Language Arts	Fine Arts	Language Arts	Fine Arts	Language Arts
12–1 pm.	Science	CTE	Science	CTE	Science
1–2 p.m.	Social Studies	MS Electives	Social Studies	MS Electives	Social Studies
2–3 p.m.	Additional Tutoring Sessions for Sped, ELL, Tier II & III				

### 3. Tips for Parents & Students at Home

We want to start you off on the road to digital learning on the right foot! With that in mind, we've created a number of resources to help you get started, to help you troubleshoot issues that may arise, and to share best practices for online learning.

#### How do I Log In?

Your student's teacher will be emailing you to give specific guidance about which online learning platform he or she will be using. All teachers will be using Zoom, most will be using Canvas, and some middle school teachers will be using APEX. Here is the link for each website.

- [Canvas Login](#)
- [APEX Login](#)
- [Student Zoom](#)

You can also access these resources by going to [www.asdk12.org](http://www.asdk12.org) and clicking on [Students](#).

#### What if I Forgot My Password?

Your student may log into each of these platforms using their regular ASD login and password. If your student does not know their password, please have them email their teacher for assistance. Their teacher will be able to reset their password for them.

#### Where Can I Get Help with Technology Issues?

If you or your student need assistance with technology issues there are two ways to get assistance. You may either go to <https://help.asdk12.org> and fill out a web-based form or you may email [help@asdk12.org](mailto:help@asdk12.org) for assistance.

#### Online Etiquette

The online classroom is a new experience for many students and parents. Given this difference, ASD has some etiquette guidance for both you and your student(s) so you are able to have the most successful online learning experience possible. The classroom is now a window into your home and with this comes some things to consider. Please see the attached documents or click [here](#) for some tips. Our hope is that as a family you review these online etiquette guidelines with your student(s).

#### Tips for Online Student Success

As you get started at home, please see the following tips for student success in online learning. These helpful tips come from many of our teachers who have taught online courses for many years

##### 1. Set Daily/Weekly Goals

The most important tip for students taking online courses is to set daily and/or weekly completion goals and to stay on task.

##### 2. Make a Study Plan

Create a clear and achievable study plan and stick to it (while allowing yourself some time for breaks or the unexpected). Write out a weekly schedule with dates and times. Make sure to set aside enough time to focus on school work with no distractions.

### **3. Manage Time Carefully**

Set a structured schedule and stick with it. Students function better in a structured environment.

### **4. Find a Quiet Space & Eliminate Distractions**

Create a quiet work space in your home. Designate an area that is free of distractions. Discuss your “quiet zone” with your family so they understand that your “school” time is crucial to your academic success. Remove all non-essential electronics or put them on silent. A distraction-free environment focuses your thinking and helps you feel more at ease.

### **5. Limit Social Media**

Log out of all social media accounts and put your electronics in another part of your home. It's easy to lose track of time scrolling through your friend's memes or reading all of your favorite comedian's hilarious tweets. Since the computer screen is an online student's classroom, it may be difficult to resist the temptation to see how many “Likes” your latest post received, but by logging off and not having your social media pages up, you will be able to focus better.

### **6. Use Online Resources**

Use any of the student resources that are available. Learn how to navigate around your online classroom's content. This is where you will find your weekly assignments and activities. You will also find your teacher's contact information. Learn the school and district websites so you know how to access your library's digital resources, website information, technical support, and more. Remember that a very useful resource will be attending Zoom sessions with your teachers to ask questions and receive feedback (and see your friends).

### **7. Be Mentally Engaged**

Quiz yourself when you are studying. This act of retrieving information you learned earlier helps you check what you retained and what you might need to review. It will also help you feel more confident deciding when it is time for a quiz or test. Go back and either watch the video or read the chapter again. If you do not understand it, do not just keep going and hope it makes sense. Going back helps because repetition always makes it stick.

### **8. Take Notes**

Write down important points. Just like in a traditional classroom setting, taking notes makes it easier to remember the important pieces of information you will need to review. Writing information down also helps you retain information. Keep notes on a regular Word document or in Google Docs and click on the “Ctrl” & “F” key to find information. Then your notes are all available on the same document and easier to find when needed, rather than having your information scattered in various areas.

### **9. Make Online Learning Enjoyable**

Play upbeat music to stay alert and maintain a good mood. Keep good vibes going while you study, it will make the studying go by faster, and will be much more enjoyable. Have fun! It is exciting and rewarding to be in school and learn about new topics of interest.

### **10. Take Breaks**

Take frequent, short breaks. Looking at a computer screen can be mind numbing, so stepping away is a good way to rejuvenate your brain. Maintain regular breaks to

avoid strain (and make sure your study space is set up correctly). A quick break and a walk outside can revitalize you to continue studies. And don't force it. Do the work when you are in the right frame of mind.

### **11. Stay Healthy**

Stay healthy! Our brain can only work to its fullest if our body is well. Take regular breaks that involve exercise and fresh air, eat well and establish a regular sleep schedule. Preparing a healthy meal or going for a run is not a waste of your time.

### **12. Ask Questions**

It's important if you're struggling with a topic to be proactive and seek out help. Ask questions as soon as you have them. Don't be afraid to ask for help. If you don't understand, just ask. Your teachers are here to help.

### **13. Reward Yourself**

If you get an A on an assignment, treat yourself! You have to remember that you do have a life. It's easier to motivate ourselves when we know there's something waiting for us at the finish line.

This week, ASD staff is excited to connect with you and your student and get started on this new adventure of digital learning. As we embark on this new educational adventure, remember that everyone involved (students, teachers, parents, administrators) is learning how to navigate through a completely different school system. If we all strive to do our best and bravely try new things, we will end the year smarter and more confident. We will surely stumble along the way, but it is more important than ever that we work through these difficulties in order to stay on track. The Anchorage School District is committed to making sure that you and your student have a positive, engaging educational experience while we deal with the unprecedented challenges in our world. The health and safety of your family is the highest priority at this time; our hope is that we can provide an engaging learning environment so that students continue to learn and strive towards success in life. Thank you for taking the time to read this message and we look forward to seeing your student in "class" soon!

Sincerely,

Dr. Kersten Johnson-Struempfer  
Senior Director of Secondary Education  
Anchorage School District