



# FAQs Regarding the Impact of COVID-19

## For Students and Families

***We are updating information as the current situation continues to develop. The latest updates are shown in red.***

### School Closures

**Q: Is school closed?**

A: No. Students are not going to be physically present on campus, but learning will continue through online instruction.

**Q: When will the school year end?**

A: The Department of Education has expressed their desire to have the current school year end on May 29th, as scheduled, if at all possible.

**Q: Will school be extended into the summer?**

A: The Department of Education has expressed their desire to have the current school year end on May 29th, as scheduled, if at all possible. In this scenario, school would not be extended into the summer.

**Q: Is instruction going to be online for the rest of the year?**

A: In short, we do not know. As of now, the Department of Education is requiring instruction to be online through April 15th. We have been told that they will reexamine the situation at that time. Please know that we are prepared to do whatever is necessary to ensure instructional continuity is maintained, regardless of the State's decision.

### Food Service

**Q: When and where will school meals be provided for children under the age of 18?**

A: There will be several opportunities for all children in school to receive meals beginning March 24th. Lunch will be distributed at Okeechobee High School, which is located at 2800 US Hwy 441 North. This service will be done in a drive-thru model from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM. Student names will be recorded. Meals will be our normal menu entrees as much as possible. Enter in the South Gate and drive around the back of the football field. You will be directed from there. Please do not exit your car. Meals will be brought to you.

On the NE side of town, meals will be distributed at Douglas Brown Community Center, which is located at 826 NE 16th Avenue. We will utilize the drive-thru model, as well as, serve walk-ups from 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM. All walk-ups must return home to eat their meal. No one will be allowed to remain on the premises.

Toward the center of town, we will be distributing meals in the parking lot of the Okeechobee County Public Library, which is located at 206 SW 16th Street, from 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM. We will utilize the drive-thru model and will serve walk-ups from 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM. All



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walk-ups must return home to eat their meal. No one will be allowed to remain on the premises.

Public Safety Officers will be at all feeding sites.

**Q: Are there any other options for getting food for my children during this time?**

A: Yes. Beginning March 24th, our District Food Bank will be open again on a daily basis from 7:00 AM - 3:00 PM. The District Food Bank is located at the District's Food Service Office, which is at 1350 NW 10th Terrace. Families may visit the food bank once per week for staples, fresh apples and several proteins.

**Q: What about Fort Drum, the Viking Community and other outlying communities? It is difficult for us to get into town on a daily basis.**

A: We are currently in meetings discussing additional alternative distribution methods in order to reach all communities. Information will be updated as soon as a confirmed plan is in place and meals will roll out as soon as logistically possible. Please like the Facebook Page, "Okeechobee County Schools Food Service Program" for the most current information.

### **Instruction**

**Q: What does a day look like while instruction is being delivered in an online format between March 30th and April 15th?**

A: The District will be publishing a sample schedule, as well as required, subject-specific plans and assignments, to help frame the day.

**Q: What can I do to support my child in an online learning environment?**

A: It is crucial that you establish a routine. To help with this, the District will be publishing a daily learning schedule.

**Q: Will ACE Pre-K or VPK instruction be impacted during this time?**

A: Although VPK sites will be closed for the school district, as with all other students, parents can access daily assignments and schedules through the District's At-Home Learning Plan.

**Q: Is participation in online learning optional?**

A: No. In order to ensure continuity of student learning, all students must take part in online instruction from March 30th-April 15th. Again, grades from this period will be a part of each student's 4th quarter grade. Given the number of assignments due during this time, if work is not completed, promotion to the next grade could be in jeopardy.

**Q: Will there be set times for online learning?**

A: No. The times for online learning will be flexible and are based on each student's assignments.



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**Q: How will work be submitted if students are learning online?**

A: The online platforms that students will use are outlined in the District's At-Home Learning Plan. Each of these platforms will allow assignments to be submitted electronically.

**Q: How can I ask my child's teacher questions when learning is online?**

A: The primary method of communication will be through email. Email addresses are in the following format: `firstname.lastname@okee.k12.fl.us` (e.g., `john.doe@okee.k12.fl.us`). **You also have the ability to email all of your child's teachers through the Skyward Family Access.**

**Q: Will lessons be delivered on a daily basis?**

A: The At-Home Learning Plan will have a plan and schedule for each grade level. The goal of this plan is to ensure that students are engaged in instruction on a regular basis.

**Q: Will lessons include virtual meetings (e.g., video chats, etc.)?**

A: Teachers will have the ability to hold virtual meetings in the online learning platforms, if they wish. Virtual meetings are not required in the District At-Home Learning Plan.

**Q: How do I know what programs I need and the passwords I need to access them?**

A: The programs will be listed in the District's At-Home Learning Plan. All of these programs are also available when your child logs in to the District's Single Sign-on Portal (<https://portal.okee.k12.fl.us>). When you log in to this portal, all of your child's passwords will be automatically available and programs will not require further log-in information. If you are unable to locate your child's email address or password, contact the District's IT Help Line. This number is (863) 462-5704 during business hours and (863) 462-5749 after hours. **Due to high call volumes, a faster option to locate your child's password is by emailing his or her teacher directly.**

## **Chromebooks/Internet**

**Q: What if I don't have a device that can connect to the internet?**

A: Chromebooks can be picked up for elementary and middle school students from the bus circles at your child's school site on Thursday, March 26th from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM or 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM. When you arrive at the bus circle, to help ensure a smooth flow of traffic, do not exit your vehicle. Chromebooks will be brought to each family by school staff. It is required that you provide a photo ID and your child's name when checking out a Chromebook. The District has an ample supply of Chromebooks, so no family should worry about being without a device during this period.



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**Q: Do I need to use a District Chromebook if I have a device at home that will connect to the internet?**

A: No. Any device capable of internet connectivity can be used. Students will access the District Portal, which is where our instructional programs are housed. Directions on how to do this will be posted on the District's and each School's website.

**Q: Can someone else pick up a Chromebook for me?**

A: No. All Chromebooks must be picked up by the child's parent or guardian.

**Q: What do I do if my child's device malfunctions?**

A: The District has established a technical support line to assist with issues, when possible. During business hours, call (863) 462-5704. After hours, call (863) 462-5749. Technical support will not be available until March 30th.

**Q: What do I do if I don't have access to the internet?**

A: We understand that this is a concern among many of our students' families. To assist with this, the District has compiled a list of several options:

- Comcast's Xfinity Internet Essentials offers low-income households internet service for \$9.95 per month (see <https://www.internetessentials.com/> for details). Xfinity is also offering free service under this plan for the next 60 days, in an effort to accommodate schools and families during this period.
- Xfinity is also making access to Xfinity WiFi hotspots around the community free to anyone when using a mobile device. For more information, visit <http://wifi.xfinity.com/>.
- CenturyLink offers discounted broadband service to low-income households. Visit <http://www.centurylink.com> and search for "Standard Lifeline" service.
- Many cell phones have the ability to work as WiFi hotspots and many major cellular carriers have agreed to waive data caps and fees during the Coronavirus outbreak. Please contact your cellular carrier to see if they are participating. Sprint and T-Mobile will allow all cellular phones to enable hotspots and other carriers may follow.
- Wireless connectivity is available in multiple locations throughout the community. This includes the parking lots of many schools, restaurants, and shopping centers. Any district Chromebook will automatically connect when within range of a district WiFi signal. We are in the process of adding additional access points to ensure that WiFi signal is available in all school parking lots.
- As many in our community are coming together during this extraordinary time, you may consider speaking with neighbors about enabling the "Guest" network feature on their WiFi services.



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### **Testing & Grades**

**Q: How will the lack of a Gr. 3 FSA ELA exam impact student retention?**

A: Promotion of students will be determined based on classroom performance, following consultation between teacher, parents, and school leaders.

**Q: How will the State cancelling testing impact this year's senior class?**

A: Seniors will not be negatively impacted by the State cancelling testing this year. All graduation requirements that are linked to State exams have been waived for this year's seniors.

**Q: How will students who are currently enrolled in Algebra I be able to meet their graduation requirement since the Algebra I EOC has been cancelled?**

A: Any student enrolled in Algebra I (except seniors--see above) will be required to take the Algebra I EOC in the future, or earn an approved concordant score (e.g., PSAT, SAT, ACT), in order to meet the Mathematics graduation requirement. Again, for this year's seniors, this requirement has been waived.

**Q: How will students who are currently in 10th grade be able to meet their graduation requirement since the Gr. 10 FSA ELA exam has been cancelled?**

A: Any student scheduled to take the Gr. 10 FSA ELA exam this year will be required to take the Gr. 10 FSA ELA exam in the future, or meet an approved concordant score (e.g., SAT, ACT), in order to meet the English/Language Arts graduation requirement.

**Q: My child is enrolled in a course that has an EOC (e.g., Civics, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology I, or US History), which counts for 30% of the course grade. How will the State cancelling EOCs impact his or her final grade?**

A: The State has waived the requirement that EOC scores make up 30% of the course grade for this school year. As a result, student grades will be calculated without using these scores.

**Q: What is the impact on AP exams?**

A: The State Department of Education is working with the College Board to arrange AP assessments.

**Q: What is the impact on Dual Enrollment courses?**

A: IRSC is working on developing a virtual instruction plan for Dual Enrollment courses. Continue checking Blackboard and IRSC email for updates.

**Q: Will my child receive grades for online instruction?**

A: Yes. Assignments graded during the online instruction period will be counted in fourth quarter grades.



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**Q: I have read that the State has cancelled school grades. What does that mean?**

A: Because there will be no standardized testing this year, the State will not be able to assign grades to schools based on student test performance. For next year, schools will have the same letter grades that they did in 2019-20.

### **School Operations**

**Q: What is the process for picking up my child's medication?**

A: If you need to pick up your child's medication, please call your school in advance. You will work with school site personnel to make arrangements for picking up any medication.

**Q: Will this year's seniors graduate?**

A: Yes, but seniors are still required to meet the credits and 2.0 GPA requirements for graduation. All assessment-related graduation requirements have been waived by the State.

**Q: How will we hold a graduation ceremony?**

A: The District is committed to ensuring that this year's senior class has the opportunity to celebrate their achievements with a graduation ceremony. We are closely monitoring the developments and guidance from the CDC and the Florida Department of Education and will develop a plan that will ensure the safety of our students and their families.