

March 24, 2020

Dear DCPS Community,

We know that families have a lot of questions about distance learning — What material should we cover? What resources are available? How should my family structure the day? (Something I am personally adjusting to as well.) Each of these answers will look different based on your child’s grade, school, and interests. Just as we aim to meet the needs of every student at school, we know that there is no one right approach to learning at home.

I know that our educators have been working hard to prepare innovative ways to continue to engage students at home. Your school will provide guidance about when teachers will be available for office hours and what other supports your school is providing. If you would like to opt out of video conferencing with teachers, please contact your school’s principal for more information.

Today, I want to walk you through the resources that are available to District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) families and share ways that our district aims to support you at this time.

How to Navigate Distance Learning

DCPS created resources at every grade level, so that students from Pre-K through 12th grade can continue their learning while school buildings are closed. When you visit http://bit.ly/DCPS_ICP, you can get started under the “Learners” tab by choosing your child’s grade level for students in grades Pre-K through 8.

Elementary School

Keep your brain and body in top shape! Click on your grade level to get started.



Middle School

It can be pajama day every day when you’re learning at home! Click on your grade level to begin.



For high school students, information is organized by course. Materials are available for all classes that are required for graduation to keep our students on track for graduation and prepare them for post-secondary success.

High School

You got this! Find your courses to keep up with your academic goals.



To help students and families manage their day at home, you will find recommended amount of learning time for each subject and grade level. You can use this information to build a schedule for the day. As you create your schedule, you can review the family guidance, which is available on the Learners page for each grade level and shares an overview of the week, as well as central points of contact for questions. You can also use your child’s interests to build in study breaks and develop other activities to do throughout the day, whether that is writing in a journal, doing an at-home scavenger hunt, or creating a piece of art.

Suggested Time Per Day	Ideas for Student Activities (6-12)
40-60 minutes, 4x/week	English
40-60 minutes, 4x/week	Math
40-60 minutes, 4x/week	Science
40-60 minutes, 4x/week	Social Studies
40-60 minutes, 4x/week	World Language or ESL Language Development
Flexible	Specials (PE, Music, Art, or Library)
60 minutes, 4X/week	Advanced Placement and Diploma Programme IB

When you are setting up your schedule, I also encourage you to think about how you are creating an environment for learning. This might include identifying a quiet space in your home and collecting materials that your child will need throughout the day. Remember that your student knows their learning style best and should play an active role in setting up their space for the day!

Watch this [video for more tips on how to create a space at home](#) that will support your student’s learning.

Course materials for your student are also available in the printed distance learning packets provided by your school. More printed distance learning lessons will be available on Tuesday, March 31 and Wednesday, April 1. We will share more guidance about pick-up logistics in the coming days.

Technology Access

At a press conference today with Mayor Bowser, we addressed the importance of getting more computers into the hands of students, as well as increasing internet access at home. Technology plays a role in distance learning, but it’s important every student has access to these online tools and resources. Just last month, we announced the distribution of technology devices as part of the [Empowered Learners Initiative](#) (ELi), and we are proud that all high school students without access to a device at

home will now receive one. We will be in touch with students and their schools directly on how they will pick up items to assist with distance learning.

I am also incredibly grateful that our local philanthropic community is recognizing the urgent need to ensure that all students—especially those furthest from opportunity—are given the resources and support to continue their education.

To help meet these needs, the [DC Education Equity Fund](#) will be set up at the Greater Washington Community Foundation in partnership with Education Forward DC and the DC Public Education Fund. Donations to the fund will help ensure students' basic needs are being met so they are ready to learn; provide students with internet and device access; and enable students to have a successful transition when schools reopen with additional supports and learning resources.

Meeting the Needs of the Whole Child

We also know that learning isn't only about academics. As you work on your child's distance learning schedule, I encourage you to think about how you are creating time for your family to engage in healthy habits whether that is through jumping jacks, a short period of mindfulness, or nutritious snacks. Watch this [video to learn more about building healthy habits](#) into your schedule at home. #FitDC also offers daily at-home [fitness activities for children](#), and I encourage you to build in time to stay active while practicing social distancing.

REMINDER: Meal Sites for Students

While distance learning continues, meal sites are open across the district including new DCPS sites that will open tomorrow, March 25. To find a meal site near you, please visit coronavirus.dc.gov/mealsites. Meal options are open to all young people under the age of 18.

Find Out More

If you're looking for more information, here are a few places to start:

- Reach out to your school principal and teachers about ways that your school is supporting distance learning.
- Check out answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and other DCPS updates at dcps.dc.gov/coronavirus.
- Join me for a Twitter conversation **tomorrow, March 25 from 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.** where I'll share resources for distance learning and answer your questions using **#DCPSatHome**.
- Learn more about the District's response to this public health emergency by visiting coronavirus.dc.gov.
- Email CEO.info@k12.dc.gov or call 202-442-5885 if you have additional questions.

Please know that we don't expect your family to take the place of a team of professional educators at school — take time with your family to relax, play a game, and have fun during this stressful time. We are all learning, growing, and adapting together. As the situation continues to evolve, our community is here to support you.

With appreciation,

Lewis D. Ferebee, Ed.D.
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