



April 24, 2020

Dear Tumwater Parents and Students,

As we continue to improve our systems for continuous learning, we are receiving a number of questions. This week, I would like to address several frequently asked questions that have been raised and share up-to-date information.

### **What is continuous learning?**

Continuous learning is not the equivalent to online learning. Continuous learning can look a multitude of different ways. While online instruction, video or lessons will be an option for many students, teachers will also suggest activities that do not require technology, considering home language, specialized services, developmental readiness, and resources access.

Continuous learning may include online learning, paper-based and translated packets, individual and/or family videoconferencing, remote small group or full class instruction, portfolio-based assessments, and support provided by e-mail and phone during remote office hours for our teachers. Our staff know that not all students have equal access to technology at home and will provide appropriate and reasonable alternative academic supports. All instruction will be aligned with academic standards and focused on key concepts, skills, and knowledge that students need to make growth and demonstrate grade-level proficiency or mastery.

### **How are we providing continuous learning?**

OSPI released revised guidance to districts between April 6th and 21st focused on learning during the extended closures. While school buildings are closed, we expect learning to continue.

Tumwater is taking a multi-faceted approach to continuous learning. Beginning with direct student/educator contact, our teachers and other staff have been communicating with families and students in support of academic work throughout the closure.

Specifically, teachers have spent recent weeks connecting with students via email, phone, or other means providing meaningful review and other resources while assessing the best ways to communicate with students. Moving forward, new learning, assignments, and teaching will take place for the remainder of the school year.

We want to thank our innovative educators that have been finding creative, effective, and equitable ways to support student learning and family connections. Supports have included:

- Printed learning packets for families that do not have access to the internet.
- Online resources that have been organized by grade band where you can find sample daily home learning schedules, emotional support guidance, supplemental learning materials, and other school and community resources.
- Posting of activities and instruction using Google Classroom, Seesaw, or other appropriate learning management systems.

The Tumwater Education Association and TSD are meeting regularly and have agreed upon staff work expectations, our collective support for continuous student learning during the extended building closures, and ways that we can work together to support students and families throughout the district during this public health crisis.

We understand that continuous learning at home cannot replace your student's regular classroom experience at school with their peers, teachers, administrators and support staff. Until we can return to in-person instruction, this approach will ensure our students are prepared for the next steps in their educational journey.

### **Will there be uniform learning across the district?**

Each school has been asked to design an approach that is developmentally appropriate for the grade levels served, appropriate to the content, responsive to school culture, and realistic about available resources. Each school and teacher team will tailor their continuous learning to account for these important factors. *If you have specific questions about your student's or school's continuous learning plan, please contact your child's teacher or building principal for information and assistance.*

### **How will grading be handled?**

On Tuesday, April 21st, OSPI shared grading guidance with districts statewide. The state is adopting rules, under the authority of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, that will guide grading across the state this spring. The theme of this guidance is, "Do no harm." We know several details, and we have some decisions to make locally. Here is what we know:

- Students in grades K-8 will be challenged to demonstrate effort and success in learning standards established by teachers. Students will move on to the next grade, unless by mutual agreement between parents/guardians and teachers they agree to repeat a grade or a portion of learning missed.
  - Elementary students will receive a report card with narrative comments regarding their learning.
  - Middle school students in courses not for high school credit will receive a report card with Pass (P) or No Credit (NC) designations and comments. NC grades will not prevent a student from moving forward to the next grade level.
- In grades 9-12, we have some grading information and several decisions that will be made in the next week.
  - Every student will get an opportunity to improve their grade with their March 13th status as a baseline.
  - Teachers will assign a letter grade for most students or an "incomplete" for students for whom it is not possible to assign an appropriate letter grade. "F" and "No Credit" grades will not be options for spring semester high school classes.
  - Every class taken during the closure will be given a designator on the high school transcript to denote the unique environment in which the course was taken.
  - Students assigned an "incomplete" for a course will be given opportunities to re-engage in the learning standards and earn an appropriate letter grade in the course at a later date.
- We currently have focus groups including teachers, principals, students, parents, and board representatives providing feedback to inform decisions about how letter grades will be assigned within the state guidelines. This process is scheduled to be completed by Thursday, April 30th. We will share more information when final decisions have been made.

### **Will my child be provided with six hours of instructional support per day?**

Parents should not expect continuous learning hours to mirror traditional instruction. At the elementary level, 2-3 hours maximum per day is recommended. Middle and high school student

hours may vary depending on the subjects and lessons. Shorter daily time commitments are recommended for younger students.

### **What support will be provided for students receiving special education services?**

Students receiving specialized services and with an IEP are general education students first. Tumwater School District has published learning resources for **all** students on the district COVID-19 Resource page.

We are prioritizing services based on collaboration with families about priorities for learning as well as other supports our students may need to access their education at this time. In addition, staff have engaged in IEP development and meetings with families and will continue to collaborate with families on evaluations and IEP development. We have also created and are routinely updating a FAQ for students receiving specialized services with an IEP and/or 504 plan. You can access this FAQ by visiting the Special Services Department website.

### **What does continuous learning look like for full-time working parents?**

We honestly understand the challenge for parents who are expected to work from home and also support their child's learning. In fact, many of our staff are in this same situation. Our goal is to provide support, guidance, and structure while allowing flexibility to accommodate the realities of each family situation. In many cases, learning doesn't need to happen during "work hours" and can also occur over the weekend or in the evening. If you need support, please reach out to your child's teacher(s) for guidance on prioritizing and/or scheduling learning for your child. If your child has an IEP or 504 plan, reach out directly to your child's IEP case manager or 504 coordinator.

### **What specific supports are being provided to the seniors of the Class of 2020?**

These students have been a priority as we have moved forward developing plans. Our school counselors have been busy conducting senior "check ins" to develop graduation plans for each of our seniors that are on track to graduate in June. The State Board of Education and our local School Board have reviewed policies and made revisions to some graduation requirements for this year's seniors. These revisions include:

- Waiving senior projects and community service hours.
- Providing flexibility to waive certain credits and modify graduation requirements when we make a good faith effort to meet those requirements.
- Students who were not on-track to graduate are continuing to work on online credit retrieval courses to catch up on any credit deficiencies.

### **Will graduations and other senior celebrations be affected?**

We will follow state guidelines on group gatherings as we consider these questions. Currently, we are gathering input for district and school leaders to consider for graduation ceremonies, as it is not looking likely that groups will be able to congregate anytime in the near future. Hearing ideas from our seniors and their families is important as we plan these milestone events.

### **What is the district doing for families that don't have a home computer or internet access?**

Because of our supportive community and the bond that passed in 2014, our district has enough technology to check out Chromebooks to students/families that need them in order to access online resources. Several Chromebook check-outs have taken place throughout the district. If you find you are in need of a Chromebook for your student, please contact your child's school as soon as possible to arrange a checkout. Each school also has a designated person(s) to help with technology questions. [You can access that information here.](#)

For families that don't have internet access, each school in our district has available wi-fi that can be accessed from the parking lot or outside the school. Please observe social distancing guidelines if you access this resource. If you are unable to access online materials, schools are providing paper packets with learning materials. Please work with your school and/or teacher for this.

**Do students have to make up days/time for the lost instructional time because of the closure?**

In order to meet state requirements for instructional time this year, OSPI expects schools to extend their school year to June 19th. This means that our last day of school for the 2019-20 school year will be June 19th.

These questions and answers will be posted to our website, and we will continue to add information as we learn more and finalize additional decisions. Thank you for continuing to work together with us as we move into a new way of teaching and learning for all of the students in our district this spring.

Sincerely,  
Sean Dotson