

CONTINUOUS Learning

FAQs for Elementary School Families



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Learning at Home

[How do I set my student\(s\) up for success while participating in continuous learning?](#)

The following suggestions can help in establishing success while learning from home:

- Set up a workspace
 - Establishing a defined workspace can help set the frame of mind for work vs. play time at home
 - Consider the location of the workspace - the kitchen table may be the best choice for some, but other families may prefer not having to clear off the table every day for meals and may choose to do their school work in the living room. Do what works for you.
 - Have a few common household “school” items available
 - Paper, crayons, some favorite books, etc.
- Set a schedule
 - Routines are important and can help all family members know what to expect during certain times of the day.
 - A sample schedule can be viewed [here](#)
 - Feel free to use [this resource](#) to help create your family schedule.

- Build breaks into the daily schedule, and encourage everyone to take them! When possible, have students step outside during the day.
- Incorporate movement throughout the day
- Allow for flexibility
 - Take advantage of the benefits of learning from home while you can.
 - When students need a break, let them take it!
 - Try scheduling academic times when little ones may be napping
 - Avoid louder, less-structured activities while adults may be taking phone or video calls for work
 - Provide all family members structure when possible, but give yourself grace, this is new for everyone!
- Disconnect
 - Set an end to the school day and adhere to it! It's so important that we take care of ourselves right now, please let that include stepping away from school work in the evenings.

Can we access books or other items that were left at school?

Right now, we do not have plans in place to allow for building access that also complies with all governmental guidance that is continuing to evolve. If you have a rare extenuating circumstance where access to a building would be critical, please contact your building principal so that as our situation evolves and opportunities become available, they know to work with you. All governmental orders, such as to stay home or shelter in place, will be followed without exception.

If there are items essential to learning that your student does not have at home, contact their teacher directly to discuss alternative access.

Are there plans to hand out iPads or Chromebooks to elementary families?

Similar to access to buildings, there are no plans to distribute devices to elementary students. Our top priority is the health and safety of our community. Since we know students will not necessarily have devices available, all elementary activities have both digital and non-digital (analog) options.

How can my student connect with their teacher?

Connecting with students is the most important work educators can do right now! You've possibly already heard from your student's teacher, and are starting to see the creative and inventive ways that educators will be reaching out to students. If your student wishes to reach out to their teacher - that's great! You can record a video of them and share with the teacher via SeeSaw or through the teacher's email. Have younger students write their teacher a note or draw them a picture and then snap a photo of it to send along. Older

students can create a Google Doc to share with their teacher or message their teacher in SeeSaw.

Beginning next week, teachers will establish one hour a day Monday - Thursday when they are available for an "office hour." Teachers will communicate their "office hour" with families and teachers will also communicate how they plan to be accessible. During this time, and through the designated communication method, teachers will be available to students and parents to answer questions, make connections, and to say hello! Always feel free to reach out to your child's teacher!

Student Expectations

What are students being asked to do?

For the weeks of March 30 - April 3 and April 6 - April 10, elementary students will be asked to make one selection per category on provided choice boards. These boards have been developed with all learners in mind and include analog and digital options. If you prefer, your student can choose options that require no technology, or you could make selections that utilize the technology you have available at home. You can access the choice boards [here](#) and on the [Continuous Learning page](#) on the main Blue Valley website.

From April 13 - May 22, targeted instruction on essential grade-level standards will be provided to families. Elementary families will be emailed weekly lessons from their child's classroom teacher. Weekly lessons will include guidance and suggestions from the teacher as well as any accommodations/modifications that are needed. In these circumstances, teams of educators evaluated the grade-level curriculum and selected those skills that were most important for the next level. These targeted lessons focus on these skills and will help to prepare students for the fall.

How much daily work is my student going to be asked to do?

The choice board work was designed for students in alignment with KSDE recommendations for continuous learning. This represents a significant decrease in the amount of time a student will have for learning for the rest of the year, but we believe the focus right now should be on family connectedness, feelings of security and overall wellness.

You should expect Kindergarten and First Grade activities to take about 60 minutes total, Second and Third Grade activities should take 90 minutes total and Fourth and Fifth Grade activities may take up to 120 minutes total. Feel free to adjust learning time to your family's schedule and lives. If the time commitment becomes overwhelming, contact your student's teacher, and they will work with you!

We did not get through all six categories on the choice board today, do we have to do the extra work tomorrow?

Not necessarily. If that scope of work feels overwhelming or not possible, then choose the areas you think are best for your student and focus on those. Conversely, if your student is flying through the options and wants to do more than one selection per category, that's ok too!

What will targeted instruction look like for my child/family?

Every Monday morning, families will receive an email from their child's teacher with the upcoming week's lessons. Lessons have been developed to align with grade-level curriculum, and although they are pared down from what students would experience normally, they focus on the essential knowledge and skills students need to be successful at the next level.

Targeted instruction will include four days worth of lessons for all core subject areas, as well as social emotional learning, specials and band/strings (if applicable to your child). In addition, teachers have been asked to personalize lessons, including needed accommodations for 504 plans and IEPs, to meet the learning needs of all students. Curious about what your child's weekly lessons will look like? [Here is a sneak peek at a sample targeted instruction template.](#)

How will targeted instruction lessons differ from choice learning boards?

Choice learning boards provided age-appropriate, activity-based learning experiences to meet the needs of all learners. However, they were never intended to be a permanent solution. A few key differences you may notice with targeted instruction include:

- Targeted instruction will more closely **align with grade-level curriculum**.
- Targeted instruction will be **personalized** to individual learning needs.
- Targeted instruction may likely take more **time** to complete due to the nature of the lesson design and its alignment to grade-level standards.
- Lessons will be provided on a **week-by-week basis**, rather than receiving all instruction up front. Families looking to plan ahead can reference the [weekly overview of topics by grade level online](#).

Does my child have to finish every lesson in the recommended time frame?

In short, no. There are four days worth of activities to allow for flexibility families need during this time. Each step is designed to be completed in one day, but you have the flexibility to do as many or as few activities as you wish in one sitting. We know that this "new normal" is an adjustment for us all, and that family life and your role as a parent/guardian may look a little different. Remember to give yourself and your child grace, and know that we are here to help every step of the way. If you are having trouble completing the activities, please contact your student's classroom or special education teacher to discuss options.

Even with the transition to targeted instruction, will my child be behind next year?

This is a fair and very real concern for families. I would reiterate that these lessons are aligned with grade-level curriculum to focus on the essential knowledge and skills students need to be successful at the next level. That being said, our primary focus right now is for

students to feel safe and supported during this time, while offering them the opportunity to advance their learning. Next fall, Blue Valley teachers and staff will meet students where they are and provide revision to instruction as needed, like they typically do at the start of a new school year.

What if my student becomes ill and isn't able to complete work?

We hope that doesn't happen, but if a student is unable to participate in continuous learning for any reason, please communicate with their teachers and include the student's counselor and building administrator on the communication. The team of educators will work with you to find a solution and provide supports as needed

Is the school taking attendance?

No - however, teachers will be looking to see that students are engaging in the work assigned and will communicate with parents and building administration if concerns arise.

Curriculum & Scope of Work

Will teachers cover the same amount of content that they normally would during 4th quarter?

No. The curriculum will be pared down and only a grade's most essential standards will be covered during 4th quarter.

How does a student's workload with continuous learning compare to their normal workload?

While this answer will vary, there is no question that the workload will look different. Regardless of whether students are completing work online or with paper/pencil, they are likely spending more time at home working than they normally do. If you have concerns, contact your student's teacher. They will be happy to discuss options and make suggestions.

Will teachers be checking in electronically with their classes?

Yes! Most likely, they'll communicate this via email, but many may also choose a video-conferencing software like Zoom.

Readiness Moving Forward

Given that teachers can't cover all of the typical grade level content, I am worried that my student(s) won't be ready for next year.

That is a fair and very real concern for parents. We're all in this together, and teachers know that their plans for the fall of 2020 will have to be altered and that they will have to develop their introductory units differently than in previous years.

However, we think it's worth pointing out that this type of variance in prior knowledge is exactly what our teachers are experts in handling. Every year they have students walk into their classrooms with wide ranging interests and capabilities and they do wonderful work meeting them where they're at and bringing them along in the planned curriculum. There is no doubt that next year will require more planning and some backing up - but there's also no doubt that our teachers are up for the task and that **it's going to be ok**. Give yourself and your student(s) grace while acknowledging that the beginning of the next school year will look different from the beginning of most other school years. All students will be in the same situation and we will adjust.

Resources for Learning

What supplies will the choice boards or provided lessons require?

Many of these lessons require only common household items, or no supplies at all. Make the selections that work best for what you have on hand, and if you have any concerns, reach out to your teacher with questions.

Grading & Assessment

What will Standards Based Grading look like during continuous learning?

While we focus on providing rich, meaningful and appropriate content for students to work on at home, there will be no formal grades given for the 4th quarter. However, teachers are still asked to provide students with feedback on completed work so that learning can be monitored.

Where should our focus be if there are no grades to help measure student learning?

The focus should still be on student learning. Grades are only one type of feedback; teachers plan on continuing to share valuable feedback, albeit in different ways. Lessons during the 4th quarter will cover the most essential content that students need moving forward, so students should keep learning to put themselves in the best possible position for next year. Focus instead on progress and on any feedback provided by the teacher.

What happens to state assessments this year?

There will be no state assessments given this school year.

Communication

How will teachers communicate?

Teachers will communicate regularly via email or SeeSaw. For the next few weeks, teachers will focus on connecting with students and with their whole class. Beginning April 13 and continuing through May 22, teachers will be emailing families with the upcoming week's

lessons as well as working with families to provide personalization of these lessons as necessary. Always feel free to reach out to your child's teacher.

What are some best practice guidelines for connecting electronically?

It is possible that your student's teacher may offer some opportunities to connect electronically (class Zoom meetings, exchange of videos, etc.). While we know you know the items below, they are important enough for us to repeat and for you to discuss again with your student prior to any online interaction. When online everyone should:

- Use respectful behavior and language
- Stick to appropriate topic discussions
- Send only appropriate video transmissions
- Use only appropriate icon, emoji, and avatars
- Wear school appropriate clothing if attending virtual meetings or creating videos

Student Support

How does my student access their Special Education services?

Special education case managers will be contacting families to discuss these specifics. In short, a Temporary Individualized Learning Plan (TILP) will be collaboratively developed and implemented while the district is using the continuous learning model. That plan will be discontinued and the previous IEP document will reinstate when we resume normal school operations.

A TILP will not be created for students on a gifted IEP, however case managers will be in touch with students and communication about enrichment activities will be provided.

My student is not on an IEP but receives additional supports [ESOL services, work with the Reading Specialist, etc.] throughout the day such as working with the reading specialist, will those continue?

We aim to continue supporting students in as many ways as we can through continuous learning. Your student's teacher will be your greatest resource in coordinating the continuation of these supports. The support provider should also be in touch soon; if you are concerned, please reach out directly to the teacher and feel free to include the building administrator on that message.

Will additional summer school opportunities be provided for students who need or want supplemental instruction?

At this point, no additional plans are in place to provide additional, extended summer school opportunities for students beyond those that have already been communicated. For existing planned events (such as summer school opportunities), the district is holding off on any determination until further guidance from the state and the Department of Health is available. Communication from the district will be forthcoming as additional decisions are made and information is available.

Words of Encouragement

This shift to continuous learning is one you didn't ask to make. Our students and teachers didn't ask for it either, and yet circumstances have required us to make this shift. Please ask questions as they arise - teachers, counselors, and administrators will be there to help. We're all in this together!

What final advice do you have for families?

Three items are key here: Prioritize health, give yourself grace, and family comes first. Trying to balance all the things on your family's plate for the remainder of the school year is both challenging and daunting.

Please remember that your best is truly good enough! It's ok if you choose to use a family schedule or if you just go with the flow. Everyone will be ok if they get a little more screen time than usual. Kids will be ok if they are super motivated to participate in continuous learning or if you have to use a little extra incentive to get them to the table. This is not normal and none of us asked for these wild circumstances. Give yourself grace and be kind to everyone!