

The Wildcat Weekly:

A Weekly Look into Suffield Middle School

Week of 04/27/20

Hello SMS Families...I hope this update continues to find you all safe and healthy.

Welcome to the Fourth (and final) Marking Period of the 2019-20 school year! We are officially in the home stretch of the year. Below you will find important information to how we will be facilitating our grading practices for end of this year and some information on how we are already engaging in planning for the 2020-21 school year.

Mr. Smith

1. Some Quick Reminders:

Date	04/27	04/28	04/29	04/30	05/01
Rotation Day	6	1	2	3	4

- For this week, our days in the rotation is listed above.
- Last Thursday (04/23), the school administration sent out information and links to a questionnaire for our current sixth and seventh-grade families regarding course selection for the 2020-2021 school year. **As the forms will help us develop your child's schedule, we are asking ALL families in those grades to complete the forms no later than this Friday (05/01).** If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Smith, Mrs. Kolodziey, or your child's school counselor.
- Attendance is being recorded for the days that the middle school is "in session". If parents know that their child will not be participating in the on-line learning experiences for the day, they should submit the attendance form by 10:00 a.m. Please use this [Attendance Form Link](#) for the middle school. The form can also be found on [Continuity of Learning Page](#) on Suffield Public Schools website.

2. End of Marking Period and Report Cards

- Monday (04/27) marks the first day of the Fourth Marking Period for the school year. Below, please find important information for this last grading period, as well as timelines and distribution of the Third Marking Period Report Cards.
- Third Marking Period Report Cards:**
 - The grades for the third quarter will be inclusive of student assessments covered in the time period of January 30, 2020 - April 27, 2020 (*this extended time is inclusive of the weeks during first few phases of the district Continuous Learning Plan - in which grades were not recorded*).
 - Grades for the third quarter will be in the traditional letter format (A,B,C,D,F). We will continue our practice in supporting students (and their parents) with "Incompletes" in developing plans that will allow students to complete their required work (and updating grades). Please contact your child's school counselor if you have any questions.
 - Report cards will be produced and shared with families (via secure e-mail) next week.

4. Teachers will be working on making final calculations of grades and drafting comments for the report cards this week. As teachers complete this process, access to the parent portal in PowerSchool will be limited.
- c. **Forth Marking Period (the "Pass/Fail" Option):**
 1. Our last marking period will be our shortest one of the school year. It begins April 27, and a majority of our assessments will end around Wednesday, June 10, 2020.
 2. The reason for the abbreviated timeline will be to allow for parents to make an informed choice of whether they will choose to keep the traditional letter grade (A,B,C,D,F) for each class or take advantage of the "Pass/Fail" option the district has extended to families for final grades in this last marking period. This option provides the state-recommended flexibility while also allowing students who have worked hard to maintain strong grades to be credited as such.
 3. While continued flexibility and adjustments around essential assessments will continue, it is important to note that the "Pass/Fail" option is for grading purposes only, and does not indicate a reduction in work load for your child.
 4. Additionally, students who choose the flexibility option of "Pass/Fail" **will not** be eligible for honor roll for the marking period.

3. SMS and the Suffield Public Schools Continuous Learning Plan (CLP):

- a. As we begin the month of May, the district will be transitioning into the fourth phase of the Continuous Learning Plan (CLP), students and parents will notice some changes of practice:
 1. Based on the parent feedback we have been receiving lately, the SMS staff will continue to increase the frequency of direct, interactive ("live lessons") through the Google Suite and other digital resources.
 - Starting the week of May 4, students can expect to have their team teachers scheduling "live lessons" for their class throughout the week. Teachers will be working to meet with each of their classes at least one time during the week.
 - On other days, students will continue to engage in SMS teacher-created learning experiences containing lesson components in which students need to actively participate.
 - Additionally, teachers will continue to invite students to scheduled support/enrichment time - where students will engage in small group or individual interactions with their teachers.
 2. In order to facilitate this increase of direct interaction between students and teachers, **we will be implementing a more structured daily schedule for the middle school.**
 - **Student classes will occur in 30-minute increments beginning at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 11:30 a.m.** (For example, A-block classes will occur 8:00-8:30, B-Block classes 8:30-9:00, and so on. Our last class period (G-block) will run from 11:00-11:30 a.m.)
 - This will allow for students and staff to engage in these direct interactive sessions without having students being scheduled for multiple sessions at the same time.
 - Teachers will continue to be available between the hours of 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. to monitor student engagement, provide feedback, and respond to student/parent questions.
- b. Right before break, the school sent out a list of expectations we are expecting students to follow when they are engaging in their "live" classes (Google Meets sessions). Here is the expectations again - please feel free to share with your children as reminder: [SMS Expectations for On-Line Learning Experiences.](#)

4. And now for something completely different...

- **Website of the Week:** This week, I am turning this section over to Miss Smith (our Library Media Specialist) with an update from the SMS Media Center:
 - Hello SMS families! It's so important to me that you have access to fun and helpful resources to make your time home more enjoyable. Please visit the SMS Library Media Center page: <https://ms.suffield.org/departments/library-media-center>. Here you will find resources including: a tab for students and parents to email me questions (book recommendations, etc.), a link to the Kent Memorial Poetry Contest, and a Padlet with activities, wellness and exercise, reading, links to virtual tours, STEAM, art, etc. I'll be updating the resources for families throughout our distance learning time. I hope we're back in school soon, but in the meantime, I hope a visit to LMC page will brighten your day and keep us connected.

Miss Smith

Important dates to remember:

04/27	SMS Fourth-Marking Period Begins
05/01	Course Selection forms for Current 6th & 7th-grade Students Due
05/04	Board of Education Meeting (6:30 p.m.)