

Sample Letter from FirstLine Schools

April 8, 2020

Dear FirstLine Families,

I hope that our fourth week of distance learning has been great! I wanted to share some exciting news with you regarding technology and special education in our distance learning landscape.

Distance Learning and Technology

Our distance learning plan has been grounded in paper-based instruction, while offering supplemental instruction via phone calls and online classes. We chose a paper-based plan because we knew this was the best way to ensure that all students had access to materials. We are very excited to announce that NOLA-PS has purchased technology for schools to use during this challenging time. This will help more students access our virtual offerings. On Monday we received 1,119 Chromebooks to loan to families while students are doing distance learning. We are working to distribute them to families without a device this week and early next week. Per the agreement with NOLA-PS, these devices will be returned to FirstLine at the end of our time in distance learning so that we will have them should we need to have another period of distance learning in the future.

As you may know, FirstLine serves approximately 3,600 students, which means there is not a device for everyone. At report card conferences during the week of March 9th and through phone calls with families, we conducted a needs assessment with families to determine who had a device and who needed a device. We have also updated these needs, as situations have changed. Our priority for distribution is for students who cannot access classes, based on the needs communicated by families. If we find that there are additional needs, we will see if there are ways to secure additional devices. We do expect, however, that in some families two children will need to share one device.

We are awaiting our delivery of hotspots to support families that do not have internet access. We hope to have those deployed to families with the greatest need the week of April 13th. We will continue to share information on programs available from [Cox](#) and [AT&T](#) for low-cost internet. We can't wait to see more students in classes next week as we deliver devices to you!

Special Education

We are also excited to tell you about the work we are doing in Special Education. We are working to ensure that students with disabilities have access to services during our time in distance learning. Our special educators are reaching out to families to discuss the best ways to support their students at this time, as indicated in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Related services, such as speech, gifted, counseling/social work services, and more are being offered via video, phone or text, depending on family preferences.

Have a great Spring Break! We look forward to getting back to class on April 14th.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Pence

FirstLine Schools CEO

Sample letter copied and modified from Instruction Partners Grab and Go resources,
<https://www.schoolresourcehub.org/grab-and-go>

Grade 1 Assignment Overview for the Week of Month XX, 2020

Dear students and families:

We hope that you and your loved ones are safe and well. We are here to support the community through this unprecedented time, and one way we can provide that support is by diving back in to deliver engaging distance learning experiences for all students.

The information below provides an overview of this week's work, as well as supporting information that families can use to support children in completing the assignments.

What are students working on this week? This week, students have several assignments to work on in ELA and math, and some might require the assistance of an adult or older sibling.

This week's work reviews concepts and learning we were working on in class. As the weeks progress, and as we get accustomed to this new structure and routines, we will include additional assignments and opportunities to connect with your teachers to support your learning. Future assignments will continue to review prior learning but will also introduce new content and engage in science and other subjects, with the aim of taking student learning further by the end of the semester.

1. **ELA:** *Customize with your expectations for what students will do in ELA this week*
2. **Math:** *Customize with your expectations for what students will do in Math this week*
3. **Physical Fitness:** Take care of your body as well as your mind by planning daily exercise in between your other assignments.

What technology will students need to complete their work? *Customize with what technology is required. Ex. Math and ELA assignments each involve watching two short videos that are accessible on a mobile device with data or any wifi-enabled device.*

What if students don't have access to technology? *Customize for how students should engage in instruction without technology. Ex. ELA: Students can still respond to the discussion questions and use the article they read to help form responses.*

How can you contact the teacher if you have questions or need support? *Customize this part of the letter based on your plan for how teachers are maintaining communication with students and families. Ex: Your teacher will be reaching out to you at some point this week to check-in with you about your work. Ex: Your teacher is holding office hours on Tuesday from 1-3pm and you can call them at....*

How should you submit your work? Customize this part of the letter based on your approach to work submission and feedback. *Ex: You can scan or take a picture of your completed work and email it or text it to your teacher.*

How will you receive feedback on your work? Customize this part of the letter based on your approach to work submission and feedback. *Ex: Your teacher will call you and share feedback with you directly. Your teacher will send feedback via email.*

How much time should students expect to spend on your assignments this week? Customize this part of the letter with your expectations for time spent on work. *Ex. Students should expect to complete about 2–3 hours of work per day. Over time, this will increase to up to four hours per day as we get deeper into the learning together.*

How should students structure their time to ensure they complete the work? Families should determine a schedule that works best for them based on their needs and circumstances. Here is a sample of what this can look like across the week. Customize sample schedule to align with your instructional expectations.