



COVID-19 & State Mandated School Closure FAQs

How long will Newcastle Public Schools be closed?

Our buildings will remain closed for the remainder of the school year, but we will shift to distance learning beginning April 6. On March 25, the state board of education approved a measure to place a mandatory closure through the remainder of the school year of all public school buildings in the state of Oklahoma due to the COVID-19 health crisis. Beginning April 6, districts will shift to distance learning plans adopted by each local school district. These distance learning plans will be in place for students from April 6 to the end of the school year. During this time frame, students will receive instruction from Newcastle Public School teachers either through online learning or through paper learning packets.

Will the district have to make up these school days?

No. The State Board of Education voted on March 25th to grant a waiver allowing districts to be exempt from the 180 day/1,080 hours requirement for an annual instructional year.

Will my child be doing school work from home?

Yes. Beginning April 6 – and for the rest of the school year – Newcastle students will be learning from home. We want to keep your student engaged as much as possible so they do not experience learning loss during this period. These lessons and activities will look different by grade level, as students and families have varying levels of access to technology and other resources. We are making preparations to ensure teachers are ready to transition into distance learning beginning April 6.

Parents and students should understand participation in distance learning is not optional. Per action from the Oklahoma State Board of Education, all Oklahoma public school students are expected to participate in the distance learning plan from April 6 to the end of the school year.

When will parents and students receive information about Newcastle's Distance Learning Plan?

Teachers are contacting students and families this week to learn more about what students need to be successful while learning from home. We will post our distance learning plan in the next few days. The plan will include more about the learning format, how much learning by grade level is expected per day, and how students can connect with their teachers. We will include information about how parents can access the plan as well as connect to grade level lessons on our website at <https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/>.

Will extracurricular activities and special events be canceled for the rest of the school year? What about prom and graduation?

Yes, all extracurricular activities and athletic events are canceled. The OSSAA made the decision to cancel all spring activities as well as the state basketball tournament. We have not officially canceled prom or graduation; however, if CDC guidelines do not change, we will have to make the difficult decision to cancel these activities.

Prom has been moved to May 22 at 8:00 p.m. Our alternate date is June 18 at 8:00 p.m. The date will depend on guidance from the CDC. If we cannot hold the prom on either of these two dates, we will not have a prom.

Our graduation ceremony has not yet been cancelled for May 14 at 7:00 p.m. at the Cox Convention Center. If we cannot hold our ceremony due to CDC requirements, we will have an alternate date for July. School administrators are working collaboratively with students from the Class of 2020. More information will be available in the coming weeks. Please follow us on social media for up to date announcements concerning graduation.

Will employees be paid during this school closure?

Yes. All Newcastle Public Schools certified and support employees will be paid through the end of the school year.

When will students report back to school?

At this time, we are hopeful they will be able to report back to school buildings in the fall. We will provide updates as more information becomes available.

What if my child left personal belongings at school?

If your student has personal items at school, we will provide instructions on how to claim belongings at a later date. If there are emergency items such as prescribed medications, please email our school nurse Heidi Furnish at hfurnish@newcastle.k12.ok.us.

What if my child needs to return items to school such as uniforms, band instruments, or library books?

We will provide instructions on how to return items at a later date. It is critical now that we follow CDC guidelines and the Governor's orders to ensure staff and student safety during this public health crisis.

Will my student receive a refund on activity fees since spring activities have been canceled?

The school will follow our normal policy on activity fee refunds. If the sport or activity has already begun competitions before spring break, no refund will be issued. If the sport or activity has not yet been involved in a competition, then we will issue a refund as appropriate. Please fill out a Refund Request Form located on the school's website under "Forms and Links" and email a scanned copy or phone photo to mwilson@newcastle.k12.ok.us for processing.

What will happen to the money in my student's lunch account?

Any balance left in a student's lunch account will automatically roll over to the next school year. If your student is a graduating senior or otherwise not returning to Newcastle Schools in the fall, please fill out a Refund Request Form located on the school's website under "Forms and Links" and email a scanned copy or a phone photo to mwilson@newcastle.k12.ok.us for processing.

Will Newcastle Public Schools provide meals during the school closure?

Beginning Wednesday, April 1, 2020, Newcastle Public Schools will be offering FREE “grab and go” meals for pick-up at Newcastle Elementary Cafeteria for any student. The hours for pick-up will be from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Two meals, breakfast and lunch, will be available for two days each week on Mondays and Wednesdays. The meal program will continue through the last day of school.

When will enrollment begin for new students for next year?

All new students will be enrolled online through Infinite Campus online registration. Documents required for new students will be available and can be uploaded within the application. Parents who currently have students enrolled will receive information soon regarding updating any household information through their Infinite Campus Parent Portal. Additional enrollment information will be posted on the district web page

My student is on an IEP (Individualized Education Plan). Will required meetings still take place?

Yes. Teachers will be contacting families to make arrangements for IEP meetings. The meetings will take place with parents by phone or videoconference to ensure your child's progress while maintaining CDC guidance for following social distancing protocols.

I have a 3rd grade student. How do these changes impact students affected by the Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA)?

Promotion decisions for 3rd grade students will be made according to data collected prior to March 16, 2020. Administrators and teachers will work closely with parents when making the decision to promote or retain a student. Your child's teacher or principal will be contacting you if your student requires a virtual conference to discuss retention.

Will Newcastle Public Schools enroll new students during a school closure?

Yes. New students who move into the district and request to enroll during a cessation of operations must be allowed to enroll, although they are not required to be offered education services until operations resume on April 6. New students may email their school site principal for assistance when enrolling or use the information posted on our district website under the enrollment tab at <https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/>.

What is the status of state assessments for this school year?

The U.S. Department of Education has granted a waiver to Oklahoma to forgo federally required state tests in grades 3-8 and high school for the 2019-20 school year. Requested by Superintendent Hofmeister, the waiver includes the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics test each year in grades 3-8, science in grades 5 and 8, and the College Career Readiness Assessment (e.g., ACT/SAT) for ELA, mathematics and science in grade 11. As a result, the aforementioned tests will not be administered, materials will not be shipped to schools and training for test proctors for this year is unnecessary. Districts that were preparing, through staff development or otherwise, for the administration of the statewide assessments should cease such activities. Additionally, the Oklahoma School Report Cards – which are calculated with data from federally required assessments and other indicators – will be suspended for the 2019-20 school year.

What will happen to my student's grades during this time?

Student grades are currently frozen as of March 13, 2020. Third-quarter grades will not be posted at this time. A plan will be developed to ensure that this school closure does not

negatively impact a student's potential final grade. Our goal is to ensure students are successful while learning at home. We do not want students to fall behind due to the school closure. More information about student grades will be posted in the Distance Learning Plan on social media and the district website at <https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/>.

Did the Oklahoma State Board of Education set a mandatory end date for school for the 2019-20 school year?

Yes. In order to receive the flexibility granted by the State Board, districts must complete a set of assurances, including that they will implement a distance learning plan for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year ending on or after May 8, 2020. Districts must begin their distance learning plans no later than April 6. The last day of school for Newcastle Public Schools will be May 12 for students.

How will eighth-graders meet the requirements of the Driven to Read program?

Oklahoma law requires students to successfully complete the reading portion of the eighth-grade English language arts (ELA) assessment in order to apply for a driver license or permit. See 70 O.S. § 1210.515. However, the test will not be administered this year as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Accordingly, the State Board of Education, at its March 25 meeting, adopted an emergency rule to allow the state to provide a medical exemption for this requirement. All eighth-graders in the 2019-20 school year will receive this exemption. After communicating with the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety (DPS), it is the OSDE's understanding that this exemption will satisfy the requirements.

Students wishing to take the driver exam should also be aware that DPS has instituted the following restrictions:

- All driving skills tests have been canceled;
- Only 10 customers are allowed in an office at one time; and
- Every customer must have an appointment.

How do I get my student's previous 8th grade reading score so they can get their driver permit?

If after contacting DPS parents still need a letter from the district, parents should request the form by completing the required information on the Reading Score Permit link (https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/newcastlehighschool_home.aspx) located on the high school web page. The Reading Score Permit form will be emailed within 24 hours. We ask that parents use the link instead of emailing the request.

How do all of these changes impact my graduating senior?

Ensuring all eligible seniors graduate is one of our top priorities. We are in the process of determining how work completed during this distance learning period will be graded and credits assigned. Our high school staff will have more information about the plan for graduating seniors in our Distance Learning Plan which will be published in the next few days through social media and on our website at <https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/>.

How will AP exams be administered if schools remain closed? College Board, the entity that operates AP testing, released updated information on March 20, 2020, regarding administration of AP exams. It states:

- Traditional face-to-face exam administrations will not take place. Students will take a 45-minute online free-response exam at home.

- Some students may want to take the exam sooner rather than later, while the content is still fresh. Other students may want more time to practice. For each AP subject, there will be two different testing dates.

For more information, please refer to College Board's newest guidance on [AP Updates for Schools Impacted by Coronavirus](#) or contact their AP teacher or Mrs. Burchett (AP Testing Coordinator) at sburchett@newcastle.k12.ok.us for specific information about your student.

What are the plans for the April and June ACT? The April ACT has been cancelled. A decision has not been made for the June ACT date. Please check the ACT website at ACT.org for updates.

How will my high school student obtain a transcript?

Parents should request the transcript by completing the required information on the transcript link (https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/newcastlehighschool_home.aspx) located on the high school web page. Transcripts can be sent to colleges and universities as well. The transcript will be emailed within 24 hours. We ask that parents use the link instead of emailing the request.

My student is planning on enrolling in concurrent classes for the 2020-2021 school year. What do they need to do now that school is closed?

Students should locate the Concurrent Enrollment Form for the College/University they plan to attend on the high school website (https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/newcastlehighschool_home.aspx), complete the form, print the form, and email the printed form to either Mrs. Burchett (A-K), sburchett@newcastle.k12.ok.us or Mrs. Barton (L-Z), hbarton@newcastle.k12.ok.us. The counselors will send the form and the student's transcript to the college/university. Students will need to contact the college or university for procedures on how to enroll. College schedules will need to be sent by email with a picture of the schedule to the counselors prior to May 24. Due to the cancellation of the ACT/SAT, it is possible that students might not have qualifying scores to enroll in concurrent classes for the 2020 fall semester. Because college testing centers have also been closed, residual ACTs or placement testing will not be an option at this time.

My student is enrolled in a concurrent class, do they need to continue reporting college grades?

No. However, we encourage parents to have conversations with their students about their college grades. Concurrent classes are reflected on student transcripts and courses count for graduation requirements. Questions regarding concurrent enrollment can be answered by the college your student attends.

How will students in CareerTech (CTE) programs earn final credits?

The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education (ODCTE) is working to develop plans that will assist students in meeting high school graduation requirements. Students in CTE programs will receive correspondence from the technology center or K-12 instructor outlining the next steps to complete coursework. Certain industry certifications may require work past the 2019-20 school year. A list of programs will be made available on the [ODCTE website](#). Additional resources can also be found in [CareerTech's FAQs](#).

Additional guidance may be found at the Oklahoma State Department of Education FAQ: <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/FAQS%20FOR%20PUBLIC%20SCHOOLS%20-%20COVID-19.pdf>

