



# BLACKSTONE VALLEY PREP

*Preparing every scholar for success in college and the world beyond.*

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## Chief Executive Officer Report

Jeremy Chiappetta

May 18, 2020

### **Key Highlights:**

- Operational Support related to COVID has included lending more than 600 of our laptops, at first delivering through pickups, then shifting to a delivery model (combination use of USPS and Pawtucket YMCA staff delivery).
- We continue to distribute gift cards to local grocers for families identified by our Social Workers.
- College Signing Day is still on! June 5, 2020, noon. We will be using our BVP Facebook page to livestream a video we are currently producing.
- Graduation for 12th graders will include a filmed opportunity to walk across the stage, with two guests, a photographer, and one staff member from BVP. The design is consistent with RIDE guidance on graduations and is responses to scholar requests to “walk the stage.”
- Stepping Up ceremonies for K, 4th, and 8th grade have been greatly reduced in scale from years past, and purchases including “Stepping Up T Shirts” have been suspended (with some very strong negative reactions from some families).
- BVP played a key role in creating [www.401reads.org](http://www.401reads.org) to promote literacy across Rhode Island. Key readers included teachers and leaders from BVP, Rhode Island Education Commissioner Angélica Infante Green and Providence Teachers’ Union President Maribeth Calabro.

### **Talent**

- We very quickly stripped the “acting” title from Alisha Smith! Alisha is now the Head of School of BVP’s ES3. Founding BVP ES3 Dean Alisha Smith. Alisha is a TFA hailing from Texas and Florida. Alisha taught 5th grade ELA for BVP prior to joining the founding ES3 team.
- We continue to work to recruit the most talented teachers for our scholars. We are facing uncertain times, and we are re-building our recruitment strategies and plans for on-boarding and training to ensure another high quality class of teachers. With an eye toward deep fiscal uncertainty, all new hires are cleared by the CFO and CEO to ensure they are filling a critical gap.

- Our staff retention, at present, appears to be higher than in years past. Several staff members who had previously indicated they were not returning have changed their plans and indicated a desire to change, an obvious response to this pandemic.

**Key Data**

- Attendance continues to be higher than normal.

Year-to-Date

School	Attendance Percentage	On-Time Percentage	Chronically Absent Percentage
Elementary School 1	95.89 %	95.35 %	5.11 %
Elementary School 2	96.66 %	98.13 %	3.40 %
Elementary School 3	96.15 %	97.53 %	5.24 %
High School	95.52 %	92.12 %	11.08 %
Middle School 1	96.56 %	97.04 %	4.05 %
Middle School 2	96.62 %	95.73 %	7.49 %
Out-of-District	100.00 %	100.00 %	0.00 %
District Total	96.25 %	95.99 %	5.95 %

All of our schools continue to be up from prior to the pandemic, and overall attendance is up by 0.75% and chronic absenteeism is down almost 3%. Even so, our scholar support team is very focused on connecting with those scholars who are chronically absent during this time.

- While typical academic metrics are not available (e.g. standardized testing, final exams), we are using a number of tools that provide a strong window into the success of our program. From tracking check-ins to monitoring use of digital tools, we are seeing strong, though mixed engagement. An interim draft report is below to provide a sense of how things are going (a final report will be available for the June meeting):

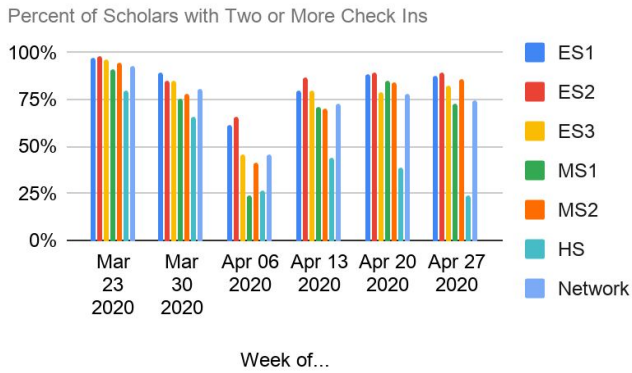
## Distance Learning Check-Ins

Frequent communication with the “Distance Learning Teacher” is the centralized key component of Blackstone Valley Prep’s Distance Learning Plan. The “DLT Check-In” serves as the central hub for all scholar communication, helping direct learners to resources, ensuring scholars are on track to meet classroom expectations, and facilitating the learning process by connecting scholars with additional staff and resources as needed.

DLT Check Ins



Since the inception of Distance Learning an astounding 24,683 individual check-ins have occurred between our scholars and their Distance Learning Teachers, for an average of 11.8 check-ins per scholar.



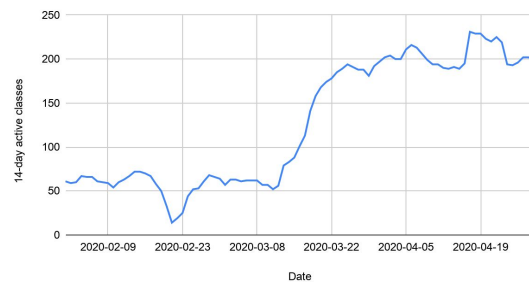
# Instructional App Usage

Core to the Distance Learning Model at Blackstone Valley Prep is a suite of online tools that have allowed us to continue providing rigorous instruction. Educators at Blackstone Valley Prep were quick to adopt these tools, ensuring that scholars were ready to step into learning activities day one.

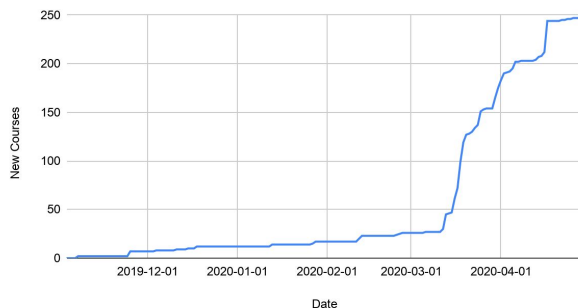
## Google Classroom

Generally at any given time the number of active google classroom courses at BVP is relatively low (~54 pre covid.) With the implementation of distance learning BVP saw an increase of about 280% in the number of active google classroom courses (an average of 205 in the month of April.)

Google Classroom: 14-day Active Classes

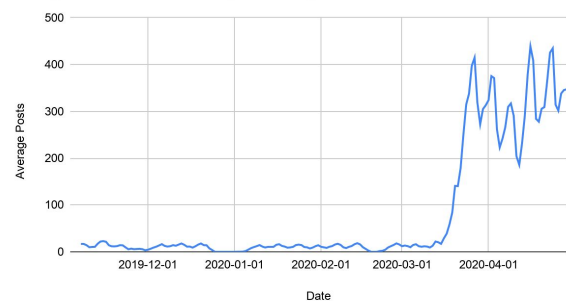


New Google Classroom Courses at BVP



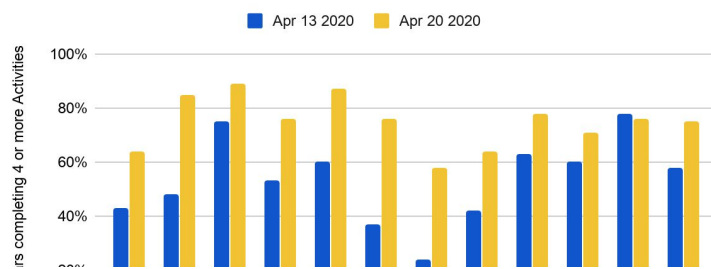
Since the announcement of Distance Learning at Blackstone Valley Prep a total of 217 new Google Classroom Courses have been created. And the month of April saw an average of 319 daily posts by teachers.

Google Classroom: 5 Day - Average Posts



## Zearn

Zearn Usage by Week

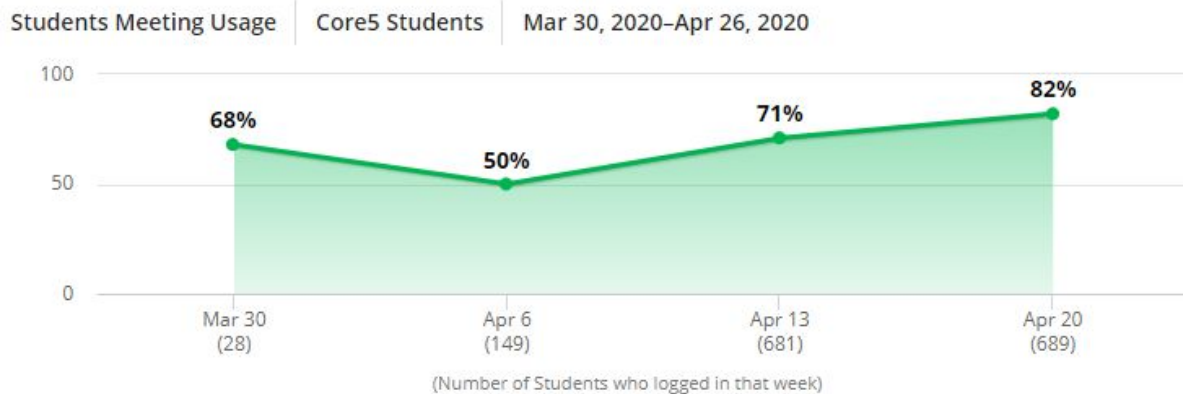


Zearn Math Independent Digital Lessons provide personalized and engaging learning experiences for students. The innovative software melds a focus on high-quality math instruction with creative and age-appropriate design to create lessons that scaffold, enrich, and motivate learning for all students. Each digital lesson includes the following components: a short, adaptive fluency activity focused on building number sense; a short, lesson-aligned fluency; concept development exercises, including digital instruction and practice; and independent practice with digital manipulatives, feedback, and embedded remediation. Zearn was implemented in Mid-April. Since its implementation we have seen many grades meet usage benchmarks of 80% just in its second week of usage. We have defined usage as a scholar completing at least 4 activities per week.

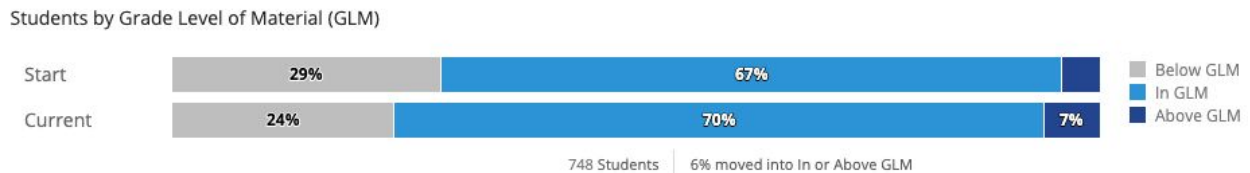
## Lexia

Lexia Core5 Reading supports and builds on classroom curriculum and focuses on developing reading skills in six areas: phonological awareness, phonics, structural analysis, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It had been used by limited numbers of scholars as an intervention at ES2, and was adopted for K-2 for Distance Learning in April.

Lexia saw an increase of over 2000% (28 active users to 689 active users) from the end of March to the end of April. By the end of April, 82% of BVP scholars were meeting their usage targets, which are set individually based on scholar reading proficiency on a diagnostic assessment administered at the start of the program.



In the short time that Lexia has been in use we have seen a 6% increase in the number of scholars completing Grade Level Material on the platform.



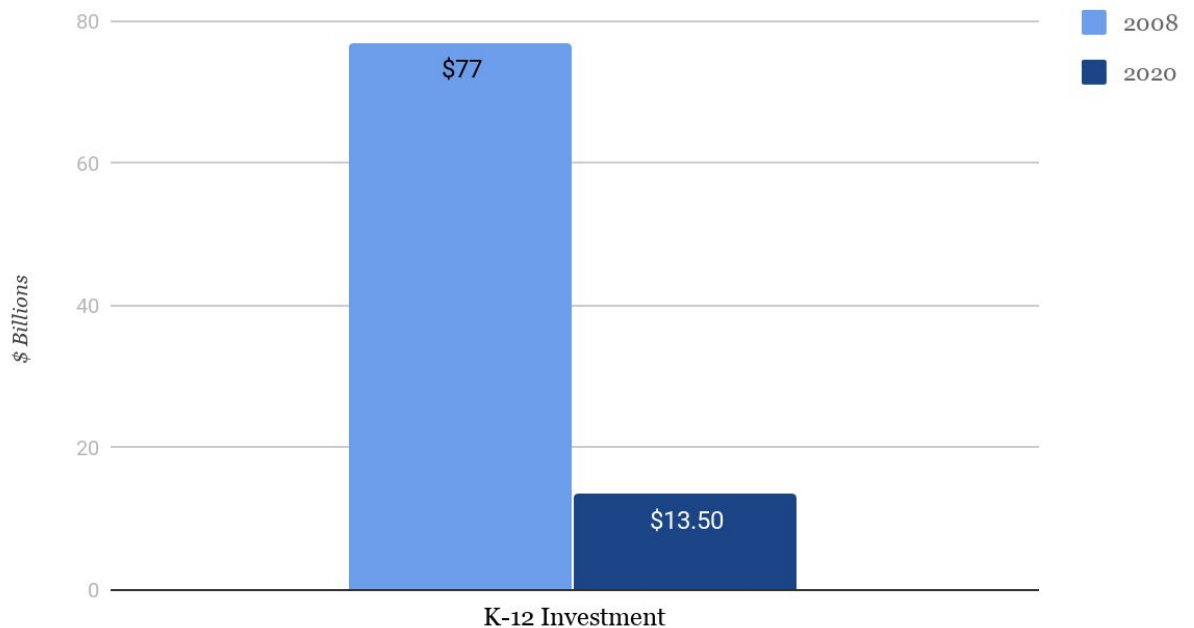
## Development

- The BVP Social Worker Fund has been a great source of community pride, with nearly \$10,000 of donations coming in from friends, families, staff, and board members. We are very actively distributing gift cards to families in need. <http://blackstonevalleyprep.org/product/social-workers-fund/>
- Through an initiative led by Central Falls political leaders, including Council President and BVP mom Maria Rivera, BVP was able to contribute four \$250 gift cards to support rent assistance for undocumented families. Our social workers distributed these supports.

**Media and Advocacy**

- We continue to work with lobbyists to better understand the Rhode Island’s response to the pandemic and potential fiscal impact on BVP. It should be noted that thus far the federal response to K-12 schools this pandemic pales in comparison to the response to the 2008 Great Recession:

Federal Investment in K-12



With Rhode Island facing an \$800MM gap, absent an additional federal stimulus, we are preparing scenarios that include 5%, 10%, 15%, and 20% reductions in operating costs for the 2020-2021 school year.

## **Facility Updates**

- The flag pole rigging at 291 Broad Street is failed. We have reached out to a vendor and the local fire department to attempt to remove the flag. With the support of Dean of Operations Manny Pina, I attempted to climb a ladder and remove the tattered flag, however I only achieved ripping my shirt and nearly falling.
- **Current portfolio:**
  - **291 Broad St. (ES1):** N/A.
  - **52 Broad St. (ES2):** N/A.
  - **3 Fairlawn Way (MS2):** Addition progress is still underway beating timelines for completion in time for the 2020-2021 school year.
  - **909 Lonsdale Ave. (MS1):** N/A.
  - **3357 Mendon Rd:** N/A.
  - **65 Macondray Street (HS):** N/A
  - **7 Fatima Drive (Network Support Team):** N/A.
  - **Other:** We continue to pursue other real estate opportunities to best support our mission, within the budget constraints with which we are operating.