

# Distance learning for TVHS students

Remote learning days Jan. 25, March 26, May 21

**EAST GREENBUSH** — With the first remote or distance learning day last month deemed a success, Tech Valley High School students once again stayed home to learn.

The innovative regional public high school allowed students to stay in home Dec. 15, with the students taking classes online from teachers who “manned” their portals and Web pages at the school.

“It’s nice to be able to stay in your pajamas and drink hot cocoa while learning,” said freshman Elizabeth Jovera of the Catskill schools.

The remote/distance learning days provide an opportunity for teachers to take part in staff development opportunities, while also providing students with an opportunity to show they are self-directed and can manage a certain amount of freedom while still completing assignments and lessons.

The niceties of staying in your pajamas aside, the student said they were also more productive in their own homes.

“I got more work done than if I was in school because I had less distractions,” said student Mandi Jung of the Coxsackie-Athens Central School District.

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During the remote days, students log on to the TVHS portal at 8 a.m. and review their class calendars. The teachers are available in real-time for questions and clarification from 8 until 10:30 a.m. Teachers are also available via e-mail until 3 p.m. Students are expected to follow the time requirements posted to the calendars and post individual work in a timely manner. For those needing to utilize public libraries — sign on as soon as possible, most libraries open at 9 a.m.

The decision to launch the pilot distance learning program on Nov. 3 was made after conducting focus groups and researching effective models last year, said Principal Dan Liebert.

As schools across the country are challenged to be more fiscally and environmentally responsible, TVHS is accomplishing both with these days.

## TVHS info sessions

A series of information sessions on the innovative Tech Valley High School will be conducted across the mid-Hudson Valley and Capital Region starting in January. The first session was held Jan. 12 at the school and sessions will continue through Feb. 4. The sessions will be held at TVHS and in remote locations, such as Schoharie and Hudson.

Below is listing of dates and locations. Each session will run 6 to 7:30 p.m.

- Jan. 25, Tech Valley High School
  - Jan. 28, Hudson Junior/Senior High School, 215 Harry Howard Ave., Hudson
  - Feb. 2, Scotia-Glenville High School, 1 Tartan Way, Scotia
  - Feb. 4, Tech Valley High School
- Tech Valley High School is located at the University at Albany-East Campus, DB Wing, 9 University Place in Rensselaer. For more information, call the school at (518) 862-4960.
- The school has won praise from all involved with it, from parents to the state Education Commissioner.

“The (students) results are good and at the same time there is a sense of purpose, sense of understanding why you’re doing what you’re doing and why you’re learning what you’re learning,” said Education Commissioner David Steiner.

Liebert said remote working is nothing new in the “real world” as employers struggle to reduce travel and travel fatigue for their employees, as well as create flexible work environments. By conducting periodic distance learning days, TVHS hopes to teach students the importance of self-direction — a key 21st century skill. It will additionally allow TVHS teachers an opportunity for personal growth as they use the time when they are away from their computers and students for in-service training.

“We had outstanding results in biotechnology with 31 of 33 students completing all assigned work with good quality. We have some bugs to work out in the system, but the distance learning concept shows promise,” said teacher Leah Penniman.

Future remote or distance learning days are scheduled for Monday, Jan. 25; Friday, March 26; and Friday, May 21.

## TVHS students help with Haiti relief efforts



An informal group of Tech Valley High School students, led by junior Cody Bellair, is raising funds for the victims of the earthquake in Haiti. The students are gathering donations that will be sent to the American Red Cross for relief efforts in Haiti, which was rocked by a powerful earthquake on Jan. 12. The students are also selling red and blue wristbands for \$10. The 50 wristbands were bought and donated by teacher Leah Penniman and will be given to students who either donate \$10 or show proof of a text message donating \$10 to the Haiti relief effort, organized by the American Red Cross. Pictured, Bellair, left, collects a donation from Halle Prentice of the Scotia-Glenville School District.



“They don’t see a whole gang of kids in the crowd,” he said. “I saw a kid in a hardwearing red-haired girl at the sleeve of my jacket. ‘What kind of cheese is that?’”

“And how did you spot the outside of you, I’ll bet,” I hear your New Year’s Eve. Did you boys in the train?”

“I came out with a free servant. But I’m not a free servant. You came on the train,” he said. “With our name’s Anna.”

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