

Dear Families,

As we begin our fifth week of At Home Learning, we hope this update finds your family, extended family and friends healthy and safe. Although we are still not aware of any positive cases within our Armstrong community, we know faculty, staff, current families and alumni families have people in their lives dramatically affected by the COVID-19 crisis and all of you are in our thoughts.

Looking Ahead

While we still struggle with the disappointment of not returning to campus to complete our school year - as we are sure many of you do too - our team is hard at work figuring out how to make the best of our remaining seven weeks of school. We meet regularly to discuss our virtual classroom experience, parent education and support, and our end-of-the-year activities and celebrations. We are especially concerned with honoring the incredible work of our 8th grade graduates and are scheduling a meeting with our 8th grade families to specifically discuss re-imagining our 8th Grade Dinner and Graduation. We also will absolutely figure out a way to celebrate the promotion of our fifth graders into the exciting world of middle school. Our Leadership Team members and specialty faculty are discussing virtual possibilities for the Shrek musical and our annual Art Show - knowing how creative our specialty faculty are, we have no doubt that our remarkable student talent will be showcased as always, albeit in a unique format this spring.

Emphasizing Wellness and Mental Health

It was good to see so many of you on Zoom last Thursday for our virtual Parent Coffee. Thank you for sharing examples of wellness for you and your children. We appreciated hearing about family time with board games, baking, cooking, and walking...we encourage you to continue to focus on your own family's wellness. COVID-19 has provided all of us with emotional and physical challenges that we did not ask for nor were we prepared for. As we move through the end of the school year together, it will be helpful to pay attention to the social-emotional impact of this event, especially on our students.

Every day we are bombarded with multiple messages that we are now living in uncertain times. Many of our students, on a good day, experience anxiety. While we cannot take away the uncertainty of the timing and the spread of the virus, we can remind our students of what is certain. Our school routine and schedule, ongoing learning, your support of their schoolwork, and seeing their classmates and teachers every day, all provide some sense of normalcy and can be counted on. If you become concerned about your child's anxiety level, please reach out to your child's homeroom teacher, our school counselors, or our Division Directors, so that we can help address it. We also will continue to post resources and information on mental health in the weekly bulletin. While we are obviously placing great emphasis on the continued academic progress of our students, we recognize that the more challenging long-term impact of this crisis may be on their mental well-being - so we want to make all of our decisions within that context and be a source of strength, not anxiety, for our student community.

Communication Plans

We will continue to emphasize communication during our absence from campus. In addition to our written updates:

- We plan to support our parents and guardians by continuing to hold all-school Parent Coffees every other week. Thank you for providing us with questions that have been on your minds and for recognizing that - just like when we are on campus - while we read every suggestion, we need to use our own judgment which can be incorporated into our school experience
- We will be holding our regular, grade-specific, education meetings - for example, with current 7th grade parents on the High School Application Process - via Zoom...dates and time to follow from Susanna Bonetti
- Finally, we will also be layering in opportunities for you to talk to the teachers, which some of you have indicated would help you feel even more connected.

Have a good week.

Jessica Miller
Head of School

Neil Tuch
Assistant Head of School/CFO