

Coronavirus Message #6

Dear SRV Community,

As we begin the second week of school closure, I am writing to share information with you about our response to Governor Wolf's announcement today, to update you as to how enhancements to online learning are going, and with some considerations for the future.

What We Know

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) announced today that all schools in the Commonwealth will remain closed through at least April 6 as a result of the coronavirus response efforts. The closure order could be extended beyond April 6 if necessary to save lives and stop the spread of coronavirus. The decision to close all schools for the additional period aligns with the Governor's stay-at-home directive announced today for seven counties—Allegheny, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Monroe, Montgomery, and Philadelphia. As a result, SRV will be closed until April 6.

What the School is Doing

As part of the SRV plan for program continuity, which is now called **SRV @ Home**, we added virtual meetings with students via Google Meet to the online program. It was so nice to see teachers interacting with students, even if virtually, and I've received many positive reports about how it went today. SRV's support staff is now able to connect with students online to support their individual learning needs and help them to manage feelings of isolation and stress.

We will be getting back into a regular routine of Administrative Team, Learning Support Team, and Staff meetings, conducted virtually, this week so that we can make sure that we are meeting the needs of all students, supporting our teachers and families, maintaining even a small sense of normalcy, and planning for the future in the most effective ways. In doing so, we are piloting additional online learning tools such as Zoom Conference, so that we can continue to enhance SRV @ Home, should we see the need.

We have been evaluating whether to plan to hold, postpone, or cancel several of the School's upcoming events in light of what is being mandated by the State, recommended by the CDC, and maintains the safety of our community. Staying closed as per the Governor's mandate would bring us right up to the School's planned spring break, which was scheduled from April 6 to 10. Because we want to have the flexibility to deliver the program on campus should we be allowed to open, or as an alternative, take a spring break, our **Spring Mini-Camp is now canceled**. As the situation unfolds and we have more information about what to expect about the duration of school closure, I will update you as to the status of other events. In addition, we are making plans to conduct some of the events, such as the OG Honoring Ceremony and the Bead Ceremony, virtually.

What Students and Families Can Do

Continue to let us know how it is going. Your feedback to teachers and your calls with me have both been invaluable as we make upgrades to SRV @ Home. It is so very important that you let us know how you are managing at home and if you need help accessing the learning platforms, and most importantly, how your children are feeling. The physical and emotional health of our students is paramount.

Continue to add to the online experience and make it fun. I am really enjoying the Max and Beef series in the Youngest Group classroom and everyone is getting in on the act, including Isa who read a story to the kids and Seamus who performed a St. Patrick's Day song with his dad. Parents are hosting virtual birthday parties and I even showed students how to build a raised garden bed!

What to Expect from Here

SRV @ Home will continue through at least April 6. As teachers, students, and parents become more familiar with Google Classroom and use Google Meet to join virtual meetings, our hope is that we can find the right balance between synchronous and asynchronous learning, and be able to better support our families in managing learning at home.

We will be holding an all-school virtual Sing on Wednesday, March 25. You will be receiving an email through Constant Contact with more information about how to attend this event.

As we hear the news that this crisis may last longer than expected, and as we look to what is happening in other countries, such as China and Italy, to determine if they are beginning to enter into the downslope of the coronavirus bell curve, it is time to strengthen our fortitude. I know that many of us are feeling that we're nearing the threshold of our ability to maintain normalcy in our homes. But I ask you to gather your strength and prepare with me to see this crisis through to its inevitable end. Perhaps it's a good time to add some stories of survival, like Jack London's *Call of the Wild* or Andy Weir's *The Martian*, to get some inspiration. And so, my quote this week is about fortitude.

"Be like the cliff against which the waves continually break, but it stands firm and tames the fury of the water around it."

-Marcus Aurelius

Sincerely,

Rod Stanton
Head of School
The School in Rose Valley