

Coronavirus Update # 7

Dear SRV Community,

As we begin week three of school closure, I am writing to you with an update about changes in the government mandate, information about our scheduled spring break, and upgrades to SRV @ Home.

What We Know

Gov. Tom Wolf has pushed back the Stay at Home order in 26 Pennsylvania counties through April 30 to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. Additionally, Pennsylvania's schools and non-essential businesses are closed indefinitely and will only reopen when it is deemed safe. Under the stay-at-home order, people can only leave their homes for essential tasks, such as buying food and pharmaceuticals. Residents can exercise alone like taking a walk but should stay six feet apart from anyone they encounter.

As of Monday morning, there were more than 143,500 confirmed cases of coronavirus in the United States, with more than 2,570 deaths and more than 4,860 recovered, according to Johns Hopkins University. President Donald Trump on Sunday announced he's extending the nation's social distancing guidelines through April 30.

What the School is Doing

CSA Drop Off

Even though campus access is restricted, SRV continues to be a pickup location for Lancaster Farm Fresh. LFF has developed a method for pickup that requires no social interaction and therefore greatly reduces the risk for transmission of the coronavirus while providing a safer alternative to going to the grocery store, making it possible for families to get fresh vegetables and fruits. We feel that this is the right thing to do.

Spring Break

The School's Spring Break was originally scheduled for the week of April 6. Based on the announcement from Governor Wolf today that PA schools will remain closed until at least April 30, we will not be able to return to campus until at least that time.

We are all experiencing the coronavirus in different ways and our children have different developmental needs because of the unique individuals they are. Families are also finding themselves in differing circumstances. Some may be working from home, while some are on the front lines, fighting the pandemic. Some may be

concerned that children are missing out on valuable instructional time and connections with their teachers, while some may want a break from online learning. I want SRV to continue to be a beacon for families during these dark times but also understand how nuanced the situation is.

So **SRV@Home** will continue through at least April 30 and, therefore, through the spring break. From April 6-10, teachers will be tailoring their Google Classrooms to meet the unique needs of learners and families under their care. This may include a reduction in volume, teachers being available for check-ins at a certain time but not scheduling a meeting, or more fun activities to do that aren't required. The autonomy that SRV teachers have, and the ways in which they know their students, have always contributed to creative teaching and effective partnerships and has resulted recently in robust online learning through **SRV@Home**. I am confident that it will result in the right fit over Spring Break.

What Students and Families Can Do

You can communicate directly with SRV teachers about your needs during this time. This will help them to decide the best approach during the week of April 6. As always, you should feel free to communicate directly with me as well. I want to know how you are managing at home and that information has been extremely valuable as I navigate this crisis. Also, give yourself permission to step away from the screen and encourage your children to do the same.

Please adhere to the [Pennsylvania](#) and [federal](#) guidelines for the coronavirus. Know that the campus is closed to non-essential personnel and we are asking our community to not gather there.

What to Expect from Here

Teachers have been training on the ubiquitous virtual conferencing tool [Zoom](#) and the School will be using it as an additional tool for interfacing with students as part of SRV@Home. This will be introduced in individual classrooms, so there will not be a schoolwide beta-test of the platform.

We are developing a web page on the School's website to be able to communicate SRV's response to the coronavirus. It will contain all communications about the coronavirus and a brief summary, with links to helpful resources, and will be ready for view soon.

We are discussing ways to host our valuable traditions, such as May Fair and the Bead Ceremony, if we are able to do so even within a short window of time, while also preparing the School to transition to Summer Camp and maintain the integrity of the program. Of course, these are all dependent upon government restrictions and the safety of our community, but we are developing different plans based on

multiple scenarios. Our goal is to hang on to as much of the SRV experience for our students as possible. Toward this, we are doing things like designing May Fair t-shirts and remaining hopeful that we will get to wear them.

It occurred to me today that the coronavirus isn't the only challenge that The School in Rose Valley has ever faced. Having been founded in 1929, the School spent its gestational period in the throngs of the Great Depression. Later, it would face several wars, an assault on progressive education, and the 2008 recession. An institution like SRV doesn't remain strong for 90 years by chance, and I think that the creative and adaptive nature of our program allows us to do just that, remain strong, during the present challenges we are facing. I so often quote the School's founding principal, Grace Rotzel, but for this update, I look to her employer and principal, and, along with John Dewey, the co-founder of the Progressive Education Association, Marrietta Johnson, who writes that "Education cannot repudiate its responsibility. It dare not fail." Know that we are facing this crisis head-on and will emerge triumphantly, and will get back to the good work for which we have been known for the past 90 years.

Sincerely,

Rod Stanton
Head of School
The School in Rose Valley.