

Coronavirus Message #10

Dear SRV Community,

My thoughts are with you all and I hope that you are managing as well as you can during this time. I am reaching out with another update about the SRV@Home feedback loop and to articulate our goals for the near future.

What We Know

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, mitigation efforts such as social distancing are working. However, COVID-19 cases and deaths continue to rise in Pennsylvania, so now is not the time to become complacent. We must continue to stay home to protect ourselves, our families, and our community.

There is no straightforward blueprint for how to emerge from this crisis. Some countries around the globe have begun to lift restrictions. For example, Denmark is about to make its first move to relax restrictions imposed to fight coronavirus. "Children aged 11 and younger return to schools and nurseries, after a month of closures. It's among the first European countries aiming to put the lockdown into gradual reverse, just as it was one of the first to impose restrictions" (BBC News, April 2020). These changes may be not reflective of the realities of the situation, however. Concern that it could result in another wave of infections has led thousands of parents to ignore the government and keep their children at home (World Economic Forum, April 2020). I provide this example not as a roadmap for our School or Country but rather as an example of the complexity of the decisions that confront us. While the path is not clear, what is clear is that the solution lies in the balance between urgency and prudence.

What the School is Doing

We are in the process of collecting feedback about SRV@Home and using that feedback to make changes that will best serve the needs of our students and their families. A survey was sent to families on April 17 and closed on April 24. I'm happy to report that we had an 81.5 % response rate to the survey and that your swiftness in responding will hopefully mean that we should have the results of the survey within a week. Thank you very much for your participation.

In addition, teachers met in Zoom breakout groups last week to discuss how they and their students are experiencing SRV@Home and to share ideas about how to bring this learning cycle to a close and celebrate student growth. Initial feedback, as expected, pointed to differences along developmental lines and disciplines, so teachers met in three distinct groups: preschool teachers, elementary teachers, and specials teachers. The next step in the process is to update SRV@Home guidelines based on all of these qualitative and quantitative data. At the end of this process, I will share with you what we learned and what changes we are making to SRV@Home as a result.

May Fair is this Saturday and I hope that you have been reading all of the communications coming from the School. Jannelle Koszarek and her team have

come up with an amazing event and have gotten really creative with many of your favorite things, like lemon sticks, sheep shearing, sword & maypole dances, and crafts.

What Students and Families Can Do

I want to make sure that I am accessible to you during this time. One of the things I miss is folks stopping by my office to ask a question, offer an idea, or just say hi. I would like to try to recreate some semblance of this so I will be hosting virtual office hours. Every Tuesday from 10 am to 12 pm, I will be available for anyone who wants to check in with me via Zoom. I will share a link to the session in the [SRV@Home Community Classroom](#). Feel free to email me at rod@theschoolinrosevalley if you have any trouble finding or accessing the Zoom link.

What to Expect from Here

In the face of COVID-19, SRV is developing strategy and contingencies for both the short- and long-term, in order to sustain the delivery of our Mission amidst the realities we are facing. We are imagining and planning for what the school day and year might look like if a full, unrestricted return to campus is not possible by next fall. I thought it might be helpful for me to share with you the School's current strategic goals. They are:

- Honoring and sustaining our talented and hardworking faculty, staff, students, and families as they teach and learn in the midst of the demands and stressors of an unprecedented crisis.
- Re-envisioning professional development so that our teachers have effective and useful support to build on their developing strengths as virtual instructors and so we can continue to improve an already strong distance learning program.
- Reimagining the nature and timing of SRV traditional rights of passage for our students so that we honor and celebrate them in the safest, healthiest way possible.
- Effectively sharing our response to COVID-19 and the challenges we are facing, the opportunities we are seizing, and the unique value of an SRV education we are affirming at the present moment.
- Planning for the safe re-entry to our campus in a thoughtful manner that protects the health of our students and the staff and visitors to the School.
- Should COVID-19 prove seasonal and result in a resurgence during the 2020-2021 school year, designing a bi-modal program that allows for easy toggling between live education and distance learning and reimagining the school day with appropriate social distancing practices in place.
- As the 2020-2021 school year begins, welcoming new faculty, students, and families if we are in a distance learning environment and providing the support they need to navigate this transition.
- Leveraging the School's assets in order to support our families and ensure that SRV continues to sustain excellence across all of its programs and to thrive in a new reality.

- Based on all we are doing in response to these circumstances and how we are experiencing the current reality, leaning even more deeply into our Mission and considering lessons learned as we chart a strategy for the future.
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The work of a school has never been more formidable, but we continue to believe this moment will present SRV with an unprecedented opportunity to affirm our Mission and augment our strong reputation as one of the most transformative independent schools in the country. In responding to COVID-19, SRV is aware of potential risks but also understands the capacity of our creative and innovative instincts to drive the School forward and envision new possibilities for the future. So my quote for this message looks to the future and comes from Albert Einstein. "Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning." Take care and be well.

Sincerely,

Rod Stanton
Head of School
The School in Rose Valley