

End-of-Year Message from the Head of School (6/4/20)

Dear SRV Community,

As the 2019-20 school year comes to a close, looking and functioning nothing like what any of us could have imagined a short time ago, I want to provide what clarity I can about the future and to share my belief in the strength of this small but mighty community. We are grateful to families who have shown adaptability, empathy and caring as we navigate this crisis together. We've all learned lessons about ourselves and what it means to be part of a community and my hope is that we carry those lessons with us as we move forward.

What We Know

Although nearly every U.S. state has begun, in varying degrees, to relax lockdown restrictions, there is still little certainty—or consensus—as to what the future of education holds this fall. The CDC recommends spending as much time as possible outdoors and keeping children in small cohorts apart from one another. This will require an agile and flexible approach to educating students. SRV's campus and Mission set us apart from other schools in being able to do this well. We will be able to use our five buildings and nine acres in creative ways, repurpose space to allow for social distancing, and leverage our commitment to outdoor education and play.

What the School is Doing

The School will reopen in a manner that allows us to be consistent with applicable state and local orders and that protects children and employees at higher risk for severe illness. Based on current guidelines for schools, we will need to screen students and employees prior to arrival for symptoms and history of exposure to COVID-19; limit gatherings, visitors to campus, and field trips; and promote healthy hygiene practices such as handwashing, and have employees wear cloth face coverings, as feasible. We will need to intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation; encourage social distancing through increased spacing and small groups; and limit mixing between groups and minimize the sharing of materials.

We have formed three distinct teams that are working to develop **health and safety** processes, design a **program** that works for all of our students and families, and to maintain and build **community** effectively throughout the year. We will need a program that meets the needs of our students at every developmental level and that is flexible enough for us to adapt to the changing circumstances. In order to do this, we are:

- Working over the summer to develop schedules and processes that allow us to follow the [CDC Considerations for Schools](#) and the [Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of K-12 Schools](#).
- Further developing a robust distance learning platform to which we can quickly transition, should we need to—one that is developmentally appropriate at every level, draws on a comprehensive technological infrastructure, places synchronous learning at the center of the student experience—a program that integrates distance learning platforms with in-person instruction so that movement between campus and home is seamless, should the state of Pennsylvania force another closure mid-year. Familiarity with virtual instruction will streamline these transitions and allow the School to pivot with ease.
- Investing in staff, creating training structures, and providing the tools that will prepare our teachers and students before school begins.

- Building additional structures to communicate with stakeholders, strengthen community, and fulfill our custodial responsibilities to SRV families.

What Students and Families Can Do

We will be asking you to respond to another survey through Measuring Success. The focus of this survey will be to find out what you will need from SRV so that we can effectively plan over the summer. We had an over 80% response rate to the last survey, so we are counting on you to reach that goal again. In addition to responding to the survey, you can help by communicating your plans to the School as soon as you have made them, talking with the families who live near you, or with whom your children frequently play and tell us about those relationships. The more that we know about these demographics and relationships, the easier it will be to align groupings and provide opportunities for communion outside of school hours.

Google Classroom will be accessible over the summer. We encourage students to engage with any content that they did not have the opportunity to access since the School transitioned to distance learning. The platform will be monitored, and a point person will be available for support. SRV is also offering virtual programming through its [Summer Camp](#).

What to Expect from Here

The 2020-2021 school year starts on Wednesday, September 2. I anticipate that all students will be able to attend in-person, daily, and for the whole school day. The school schedule may shift somewhat, however, and might be characterized by:

- Block scheduling (e.g., ten days on, three days off) to allow for deep cleaning of classrooms and surveying families about possible contagion to limit any risk.
- Students learning in small cohorts primarily determined by existing age-level vertical groups and secondarily by geographic and social relationships outside of school.
- Differences in grouping practices, such as having same-age siblings in the same cohort, but otherwise, groupings will be similar to the 2019-2020 school year.
- Specials teachers teaching in each group's main classroom and assigned to a particular group for a specific period of time to limit student movement. For example, the Oldest Group might learn Spanish in person for four weeks and then music in-person for the next four weeks. Virtual learning could be provided simultaneously by the other specials teachers to maintain the interdisciplinary nature of the SRV program for each cohort.

I remain grateful to our community for their partnership and support as we have met challenges and learned together. As we develop specific schedules and groupings, opportunities for student orientation, and health and safety practices, we will share this information with you through monthly updates throughout the summer and on the [SRV website](#). Again, I believe that SRV is well-poised to meet these challenges and I look forward to the opportunities to lean into our Mission, grow as an organization, and emerge as an innovative leader in the educational landscape.

Respectfully,
Rod Stanton
Head of School
The School in Rose Valley