

OFFICE OF THE HEADMASTER

March 17, 2020

Dear Austin Prep Parents and Students,

The challenges we are facing as a nation and world community seem to be changing every moment. We're all adapting to significant disruptions in our daily lives, the duration of which remains unknown. As you know by now, the Governor of Massachusetts has closed all public and private schools in the Commonwealth for three weeks. As of this writing, [schools may reopen on Tuesday, April 7, 2020](#) and we are planning to return on that date. Of course, plans are subject to change depending on circumstances.

As I mentioned to you in my March 13 correspondence, I would be in touch with you today. Austin Prep is implementing remote teaching and learning. Thanks to dedicated faculty and staff, we successfully spent yesterday planning and preparing for an online start tomorrow. As much as I believe we are well positioned to launch this initiative, I also recognize this is new for all of us – faculty, staff, students, parents, and school leadership. As a result, we all need to be flexible, patient, and understanding.

Many faculty and advisors have already reached out to their students and advisees over the last several days testing this new framework of instruction. A full schedule of remote teaching and learning begins tomorrow, March 18. All students and faculty will follow the same online schedule which has been adapted from our current block schedule. There will be four classes a day and advisory will meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Lesson planning and assessment remains at the discretion of the teachers and department chairs, as it always has. As you might suspect, these plans and assessments will fall into the “alternate” category. Under separate cover later today, you will receive more detailed information from the Office of Academic Affairs.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to share some informational items related to our status and operations.

- Austin Prep's has a [dedicated webpage](#) with information, resources, and links to help you stay informed.
- **Campus facilities have been deep-cleaned and the campus will remain closed to all faculty, students, and parents until further notice.**
- As of today, I am not aware of any confirmed cases of the coronavirus at Austin Prep.
- The state athletic association has postponed the start of spring sports to Monday, April 27.

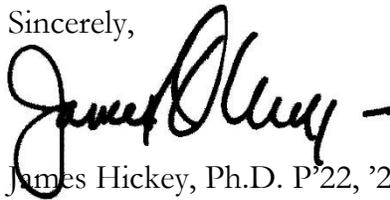
I'm going to add an editorial comment here. This is a challenging time that's causing anxiety and apprehension for many. In my considered opinion, a little levity and a little humor will go a long way in mitigating unrest and uneasiness. Many of the saints used humor and laughter. That's not a coincidence. Humor leads to stronger faith and faith leads to joy.

Yesterday, the Austin Prep Baseball Team posted on their [Twitter account a message](#) about "firing up some positivity" and a guessing game about a photo they shared. It was a photo of huge white rolls of turf. I couldn't help but think "toilet paper" in light of this curious run on TP we're experiencing. Some might see that as irreverent, but humor reminds us of our humanity. A few of us laughed pretty hard; it broke some of the tension of the last few days and paved the way for a better day.

This is a challenging time and the strengths of Austin Prep will sustain us through uncertainty: our commitment to *veritas*, *unitas*, and *caritas* – it's the compass that charts the course, our sense of community – highly personalized and interactive relationships, small class size – enabling the faculty to customize and adapt instruction more easily, and, of course, our faith. As St. Augustine said, "faith is to believe what you do not see. The reward of this faith is to see what you believe." A little humor will help, too.

I'll be in touch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Hickey -". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James Hickey, Ph.D. P'22, '23, '24
Headmaster