

STEVENSON

March 20, 2020

Dear Lower Division Families:

Together, we successfully navigated our first week of remote learning! Already, we have learned so much about new ways of communicating and connecting with one another. I am in awe of the patience, flexibility, resilience, and curiosity our students (and parents!) have demonstrated this week. In the spirit of continued growth and learning, I write to provide an update and overview about our lower division remote learning strategy, priorities, and program elements that will begin next week.

Over the last week, our administrative team and faculty have been working diligently to develop a remote instruction approach that best meets the needs of our students and families. We have developed a targeted plan focusing on three distinct priorities. We will:

- Attend to the social and emotional well-being of our students by providing connection, humor, and familiar faces, rituals, and traditions
- Create a balanced learning approach utilizing highly-vetted online tools created specifically for this age group and structured “no-tech” assignments
- Provide frequent, scheduled 1:1 conversations and check-ins with students and families to continually address individual needs

Google Grade Level Page

Beginning Monday, March 23, each class PK–4 has a dedicated Google Grade Level Page. You can visit these pages through the links on your [Pirate Page](#).

These pages will be the primary locations parents and students will go for their specific daily learning assignments. The page is designed so you can easily print out the daily schedule of assignments and track progress. We recommend you bookmark this page so it is easily accessible. It will also be posted on your [Pirate Page](#). Consider this your family’s learning “home page.”

Morning Meeting & Joyful Connection

In an effort to keep students connected to one another and the “classroom,” we will start each school day with a Morning Meeting. At 8:45 a.m., we will connect online in the virtual classroom. The meeting will be 15 minutes in length and will be recorded for students who cannot join in real-time or for those who just want to watch it again! These gatherings will provide joyful and positive moments in each day that remind us that we are all together in

this new world of learning and that we remain a class of enthusiastic Pirates. Students and parents are invited to join each morning. Please help your child log in and troubleshoot technical difficulties prior to the Morning Meeting.

Additionally, faculty will develop daily themes (Monday will be Pirate Pride Day!), inviting special guests to “class,” creating video messages and fun clips to share, and more to keep morale up and our students’ spirits high.

Thus far we have focused our efforts on moving students to remote instruction. We also want to foster virtual connection in our parent community and will soon provide engagement opportunities.

Academic Instruction

We are mindful of the challenges parents are facing in taking on this new academic support role within their homes, as well as the concerns around our youngest students using technology more frequently. We feel we have created a healthy balance that will support our families, engage students, provide individualized instruction, and create space for creativity and connection.

Daily Class Assignments (No-tech)

Teachers will continue to create assignments that do not involve technology or screen time. These assignments will include reading, writing, math, STEM, social studies, art, music, dance, PE, and more. These will be posted daily on the Google Grade Level Pages. Teachers will finalize the weekly assignments every Sunday by 5:00 p.m.

Acellus

We are introducing an individualized online learning platform ([Acellus](#)) that students and teachers can largely navigate independent of parental oversight. Acellus delivers online instruction, compliant with the latest standards, through high-definition video lessons made more engaging with multimedia and animation. Each lesson is carefully designed to connect with previously learned knowledge like interlocking building blocks.

We will tailor the academic program to the individual needs of each child, and as we move forward, we can swiftly advance or adjust the learning for each student. The platform is very user-friendly, and we anticipate an easy onboarding.

Please know that as teachers we were very hesitant to introduce an online learning platform for our youngest learners. That being said, we recognize the needs of our parents whose professional responsibilities limit their ability to fulfill multiple roles

effectively. The research on Acellus is very positive, and we are excited to use it during this limited period of remote learning.

In summary, teachers will continue to provide two-three hours of "no tech" lessons. [Acellus](#) is available for supplemental and enrichment learning and to further support parents that cannot provide the 1:1 oversight for the "no tech" lessons.

Individual Instruction

Classroom teachers will continue to connect individually with parents and students each week by phone or Webex. These conversations will provide opportunities to check in about the social-emotional state of the family and discuss academic and learning progress and needs.

Erica Herro '90, director of curriculum and instruction, will also be available for extra support. There is a signup link on each Google Grade Level Page.

We are together in this new space. Trust that our faculty is here for you and your child and that we will be guiding and teaching and listening and cheering every step of the way. I am genuinely excited about the new learning opportunities this model brings to us. Most importantly, find time to be together, get outdoors, play, laugh, and within this unique moment in our history, find the opportunity to learn new things about each other and model the important lesson that adversity yields growth.

With respect and care,

Mary Charles Collett
Dean of the Lower Division
Grade 3 Faculty