

Questions and Answers

Regarding DLP and/or COVID-19

Questions regarding future plans

Are we going to continue like this for the rest of the year? When will go be back? When will classes resume? We will like you to post more information about the work or talks that you are having with the government and please. Will the school year continue or are classes over until Aug 2021? When will school start for next school year? When is the next year calendar gonna be out? Will our kids complete this school year program with distance learning? When will it be safe to go back to school? Cuanto tiempo va a durar esto? What's going to happen if we can't return to school in may or June? Do we have the entrance date for august? Hasta cuando va a durar este sistema, es decir lo que dure la contingencia? What will be the criteria or which guidelines will be followed to reinstate in-person classes? What will happen to the school year if this goes on for 2-4 months? Will it be compressed in the summer so kids don't lose a year? how will we make sure that kids don't fall back on learning? Regresaran a clases presenciales? Y si no es asi.. cambiaran el modelo de clase a como estan los de middle school?

As we plan for the end of this school year, I would like to officially announce that in a meeting on April 17, 2020 with the **Executive Committee of the ASFM Board of Directors**, it was decided that **the 2019-2020 school year and academic program will be completed online via our Distance Learning Plan (DLP)**. We believe that ASFM is positively and uniquely prepared to continue with and conclude this school year via our DLP during this ongoing contingency and unprecedented times.

We will use the community wellbeing as the key factor in determining when we return to face to face classes on campus in the future. We will also rely on health professionals from the community and from the city to help us make decisions.

Our current calendar remains the same and as is published on the ASFM website.

Fow now, **we do not have an official calendar for the next 2020-2021 school year**. As soon as we do, we will be sure to announce this to the entire community.

All students will have a fair opportunity to conclude this school year. **This contingency and the DLP in and of itself will not be a barrier for a student**

progressing to the next grade level or graduating from 12th grade.

Questions regarding the structure of our Distance Learning Program:

Why are we not connected in regular school hours like other schools? I Will like to know why do the elementary kids can do 2 specialist classes insted of doing one each day? Can the teachers of preK do live 30min session daily with their students? Can they also guide the activities? I feel that everything is so distant and that there has been little presence of the teachers. I like the 5min morning videos, but I feel that something is missing in preK. Cant they have 2/3 hors live class? ¿When are zoom sessions for lower elementary and pre school going to be available live on a daily basis for one to two hours to support continuity of the learning process? When are you going to implement daily Zoom sessions with the kids and teachers?

Please know that for the past months **we have been researching best practices, reviewing strategies with other schools around the world**, checking with specialists from online and distance learning platforms and organizations, and aligning all of this research with developmentally appropriate strategies for teaching and learning for all students and teachers from Nursery through High School.

Please also understand that this is new for all of us and we will be the first ones to make adjustments to our plans as we learn from our own experiences and the input from our stakeholders. No matter what, and as always, **we will continue to place a priority on what is best for children and adolescents and their growth, learning, and wellbeing**. As I have asked in the past, please trust that we are doing what we feel is best for your children as we adapt to our "new normal."

We are happy to share with you the following great explanation and [citation](#) regarding **synchronous vs. asynchronous learning**: "The thing is, there is nothing inherently wrong with asynchronous learning, nor with synchronous learning. Each is suited to solve different instructional problems, under specific conditions, depending on the goal of the learning, the characteristics of the learners, and the course format.

Now, don't get me wrong, when I hear of school leaders prescribing 100% synchronous learning during this time period, I can't help but cringe. Besides synchronous learning tools being notoriously unreliable and difficult to use with a large number of young students, prescribing 100% synchronous learning violates

two key principles of instructional design for online learning:

1. A direct copy of a face-to-face classroom using online tools will surely fail
2. You should never completely eliminate a useful instructional strategy from your toolbox

While it works much, much better for the learning context that we're in at the moment, we probably shouldn't prescribe a 100% asynchronous format for an online course either. Students can benefit from a synchronous dialogue session via conference call once in a while, if only to reduce the feeling of isolation between peers and instructors." (Zach Groshell)

Is all material required to go into the other grade level going to be covered in DLP?

The appropriate and adequate content will be covered in the DLP to allow students to successfully progress to the next grade level.

If however, a student has been struggling all school year and has been working with the school administration, teachers, and support service personnel on a specific plan to ensure success, these goals and plans will have to be completed successfully in order to move forward as planned.

What happens with all the belongings of the students if we don't return to school

All student and staff belongings are safe at school as nobody has access to the school premises as this point in time.

Until it is warranted safe by the authorities, we will not be able to provide access to the campus for staff and students to claim their belongings.

Belongings will be available to all as soon as this contingency is lifted.

Questions about students who were/are behind

I worry about my son who was already behind. I wonder about next year a lot. How will he be graded? What kind of support will he need next year? And how are we going to help him make up for this time? I realize everybody is facing the same situation. I just wonder how it will be different for those who were already behind before.

All teachers, support staff, and administration will work with all students and parents to help all students, but especially those students who have struggled in the past, catch up and/or keep up with their learning. **This contingency on its own will not be a barrier for student progress.**

Be aware that this process will take time and will require extra effort, patience, and understanding on the part of students, parents and staff.

Why is it that this survey doesn't ask about our child's grade level? Don't you think that the answers for this survey would be different according to grade level?

The purpose of this survey was to learn more about your overall, general experience following the first three weeks of Distance Learning with your children.

The administration and the teachers have been and will continue to make adjustments and improvements to the DLP as the days and weeks go by. Your feedback, together with the experience of our professional educators and the input from all learners, is crucial to the ongoing distance learning experience.

Teachers have been seeking input from students and families in an informal and formal manner from grade to grade.

Parents should feel free to reach out to the sectional Principals if they have specific ideas and suggestions regarding specific grade levels.

Questions about discounts and tuition

Are we going to get a discount for each month/week kids cant attend school? Are you making a discount for the next months tuition?

The ASFM Board of Directors is sensitive to the unprecedented moment our community members are experiencing and is well aware that financial constraints may afflict some members of our parent community. As a temporary solution, the Board took the following actions :

- A reduction of 20% was applied to the tuition for April, 2020.
- Should a family require additional financial aid and/or a deferred payment plan until July 31, they should refer to the April 3rd Weekly Eagle message for the temporary Relief Fund application form. These applications will be reviewed by a special committee on a case by case basis. The goal of this committee will be to ensure that all current ASFM students can conclude the 2019-2020 school year and no student will need to withdraw for economic reasons.
- Tuition fees will be frozen through December 31, 2020. This means that there will be a 0% increase in tuition from August through December of 2020.
- We are optimizing all expenses and we will have no increases or movement in staff salary ranges for the 2020-2021 school year. Hopefully with this additional effort we can avoid reduction in staffing in the areas of security, cleaning, administration and athletics. Many of these individuals who support your children and the school are in danger of losing their jobs. These employees and their families need our help to safeguard their jobs and continue with access to social security.

This temporary financial solution and program will be funded solely by ASFM's operational savings and endowment resources. The Endowment Fund was originally created to guarantee the growth and sustainability of the institution from generation to generation, and not to fund operational expenses nor to be used as an emergency relief resource. The use of endowment resources on this occasion is an exception due to the magnitude of the financial impact of this worldwide pandemic and as a true act of solidarity for the ASFM parent community.

What will the school do with all the material that we gave at the beginning and children did not get to use?

Maybe do small packages so kids use it at home for distance learning.??? Thinking that maybe we will not be back.

The material / supplies that were still available and in use before we went to the DLP will most likely be left to be used at the time we resume classes face to face.

At this point in time, for health precautions we can not access the school premises to create packets to give to families and students.

Can we borrow a laptop for my son or daughter?

At this point in time, for health precautions we can not access the school premises to create packets to give to families and students.

Unfortunately, we can not open this door at this point in time to provide additional technology to families. If you are having problems due to the lack of technology at your home, please reach out to your classroom teacher to see if she or he can provide alternative time schedules so that your at home technology can be shared between your family members.

There are many locks and passwords in what the teacher sends, very frustrating to try to work and not be able, is there anything that can be done?

Please contact your individual teacher(s) if you are having difficulty accessing the system or if your children are unsure of how to access, retrieve, or submit information.

Will the new grading system affect my daughter's current Scholarship? It appears

that now will be more difficult to reach the 3.5 average

We do not see the new assessment and grading system as a barrier to students performing at their highest levels.

Students should reach out to their teachers to have a clear idea of what they need to do or show in order to move to a higher level of performance on a learning and/or grading rubric.

Questions about close out to this school year

Will the kids have a closure before going to the next grade level? How are we going to find closure for the school year? What is the plan for the end of this school year? If students do not get a chance to go back and finish the year...and go directly to next grade level, could they at least have a day or two for closure in former classroom?)

Closure is important to both students and teachers and we will do our best to conclude this school year in the best manner possible. Using the beginning of next year in one way or another to conclude this school year is definitely an option that we are considering.

Could we consider submitting assignments on a platform instead of by email?

Students should reach out to their teachers if they are having difficulty submitting assignments. Teachers are flexible and understanding and will problem solve with students to make sure they are able to show their learning.

The Unified classroom platform is also a tool that can be used for this purpose. Students should speak with their teachers if they are having difficulty with this platform.

Could there be any kind of one on one tutoring with their home room teacher, maybe 1-2 hrs a week in an open space, with all the sanitary requirements?

All teachers are available for their students should they need extra support and help. Students in this situation should reach out to their teachers or to their counselors to request extra support.

The ASFM support staff is also available to support students in need; no matter what, the first person to be approached should be the classroom teacher. From there, the classroom teacher will reach out to others to coordinate extra help and support.

Can the school acknowledge and discuss the covid19 situation with students?

Right now my preschool kids are asking questions not out of fear but out of genuine curiosity and it would be nice if the school would organize two webinars by grade talking to kids at their level about a. what is the coronavirus. This one just the science behind it, maybe led by science teacher(s). b. how the kids feel about being isolated and why we are staying at home.

At this point in time, we feel this topic should be dealt with and managed by parents with their children. The topic is too sensitive to be presented in a global manner to all students in one generic webinar.

Many good resources are available online to help parents speak with their children about this topic. One resource we especially like is provided by the [National Association of School Psychologists](#).

Questions about grading, exams, and assessments

How are the exams going to be? What happens with exams? The ones that are graded? Awards? Como se va a evaluar al final del año si lograron los niños cubrir sus temas bien?? How to make sure they are meeting their educational goals? Will there be a grade level reassessment after we all return to school?

Grading? Are we receiving a weekly checklist of what my child is supposed to do and an evaluation of how my kid is responding to the teacher's requests?

Adjusted Mindset for Grading and Reporting

Distance Learning is different from on-campus learning. As much as we try to maintain the same calendar, same level of rigor and same expectations, Distance Learning is very much different. Normally, our grading practices would rely on the completed work by students while on-campus. In DL, we do not have this luxury. Students will have multiple support systems or will have a lack of support systems that are usually in place. What students produce is likely to have been different than that of on-campus learning. Knowing this, we need to treat it differently too. These ideas are necessary to keep in mind:

1. Learning is learning is learning. No matter what, if students do attain new knowledge and skills and attain a better understanding of concepts related to standards, then this is a positive thing.
2. Assume Positive Intentions: We have put parents in a near impossible position with students. Parents have been thrust into a situation that is challenging. We need to remember that parents and students have generally performed admirably given the circumstances.

ELEM (N-5th grade) Information

Regarding Grading and Reporting

Assignments

All assignments are announced weekly by each teacher and are expected to be submitted to teachers by the following Sunday. Some families may have extenuating circumstances for completing and/or submitting assignments within the designated timeline. Students and families are responsible for keeping track of assignments. Reminders are mentioned in videos and live discussions.

Rubrics

All assignments or bigger projects should have a rubric available for students, parents and staff to access. This should be written in student language to ensure that students are aware of expectations (grades 1 to 5). All rubrics in nursery, prekindergarten and kindergarten should be accessible to parents.

Feedback

Ongoing and at the discretion of the teacher for frequency.

Record Keeping

Elementary teachers do not post ongoing grades in Unified Classroom. Grades are kept by teachers and posted during three reporting periods.

Homeroom Teachers: It is expected that each teacher keeps a record of individual assignments through a common grade book.

LST: Follow the spreadsheet

Assistants: Follow the spreadsheet

Exams

None. There will be ongoing assessments that follow the scope and sequence for developed units.

Report Card Grading

To be reviewed at each grade level and content area according to what can be taught, submitted and assessed within distance learning planning.

An evaluation of the current report card will be evaluated by team leaders and curriculum department to determine standards that are most notable within any adjusted units and assignments.

Non-academics will be reviewed as well according to the traits, attributes and behaviors that are witnessed during distance learning.

Areas that are being explored for reporting include:

- Narrative statements noting growth and areas of need
- Monitoring student growth through 1:1 weekly check-ins with each student and family (required by each homeroom teacher; discretionary for Spanish and Specialist teachers)
- Grading: Meeting expectations and Incomplete with more evidence needed; no failing grades if at all possible.
- Self-assessment: Depending on grade level and age, this will be considered as part of the final grading.

MSHS Information

Regarding Standards and Assessment

Assignments

Final assignments will take the form of multiple-standard projects or a portfolio of evidence of learning based on work throughout the semester. Teachers are being asked to focus on the most essential standards in their respective curricula.

Rubrics

All assignments will continue to be assessed on a 4-level rubric. Students will receive multiple opportunities to provide evidence of learning during our DL.

Feedback

Students will continue to receive and give feedback throughout the DL weeks through both protected times and office hours which appear on the calendar. It is up to the students to take advantage of these opportunities.

Record-Keeping

Teachers will continue using the Unified Classroom platform to monitor student learning. Teachers are encouraged to use portfolios or other similar methods to track progress and to allow students to demonstrate progress.

Awards and Scholarships

These will continue as normal, taking into consideration the new scholarship policy.
*Community Service Learning required hours will be modified for scholarship purposes.