

Dear H.A. Family:

I wanted to reach out to you and update you on a few matters as we weather this health crisis together. There are some disparate pieces of information I need to pass along:

- Of primary importance to our students, **we are moving to a Monday-Thursday model for online instruction, starting immediately.** Fridays will be reserved for remediation and to allow students to catch up on work. Fridays may also be used for teachers to give assessments to students. We have found that, in the absence of face-to-face classes, the students are spending an unreasonable amount of time trying to complete their school work. In fact, many of our best students have reported being overwhelmed by the workload. Certainly, we are under enough stress as families and as a community, and we do not need the classwork here to unnecessarily add to that stress. Additionally, we are aware that in these difficult economic times, many of our students have taken on jobs or are engaged in childcare. I am urging flexibility on the part of our faculty and staff, and I am trusting our students not to take advantage of that flexibility.
- We will not have school on Monday, April 13th, for the Easter Holiday. This will allow students to have a four-day weekend, since this Friday, April 10th is Good Friday, which was already a scheduled holiday.
- I want to remind everyone that the school and all its facilities are closed. Students and families should not be using the athletic facilities at all, and the only reason to be at the school is to drop off and pick up work and materials. The front gates will be locked, but the gate on the preschool side will remain open to allow access to Lower School classrooms. We have had too many people coming into the office, and we need not put any of our administrators (who are taking care of necessary business from school) at risk. If you must come to the school for some reason, please call or email the appropriate person. If you don't know who to contact, feel free to call one of the Division Heads or me.
- As many of you know, we are in the middle of a capital campaign that will transform Houston Academy's campus. Phase I of that transformation is a total remodel of the Lower School. We are going to take advantage of the school closure to start work on this project. This does not mean that we will not return to classes on campus if the situation allows us to do so – if we do return this school year, we will make logistical adjustments to allow for us to return. However, given the potential supply chain issues, we thought it prudent to begin construction so that we can be sure the work will be finished by the start of the 2020-21 school year.

Finally, I can't emphasize enough how proud I am of our teachers and students. The kids have been working incredibly hard. In fact, I believe they are working far harder than they do during "normal" times. Furthermore, our faculty has very quickly transformed their teaching and have spent countless hours learning new skills and constructing lessons for our students. If there is *any* silver lining in all of this, I think we have come to appreciate those simple aspects of our daily lives that we normally take for granted. I, for

one, am painfully reminded of how much I love and miss these students and our HA family, in general.

Please take care of yourselves. I am told by local officials that the peak of the virus will reach Dothan on or around April 20th. Let's not get complacent and start to believe that the storm has passed!

God bless all of you.

Dr. Scott Phillipps, Headmaster

