

Q. What will school look like in the fall with the COVID 19 pandemic?

A. We are all asking ourselves what we are going to do in the fall. There are three scenarios:

- 1) We will be back on campus as normal. This is the least likely scenario.
- 2) Hybrid situation – some on campus and some at home learning virtually.
- 3) Totally virtual learning.

The Board of Trustees has established a COVID19 response team to assist. What will drive our decision will be the standard of care we need to provide, and we will be working with the health department and our legal advisors to make the best decision as to which scenario we will prepare for.

Q. When will you notify families about the final decision for next year?

A. We cannot provide a final decision, but we will provide our families an update on July 1. We will have more specific information then.

Q. How will you ensure safety of students in either of the two scenarios that bring students back on campus?

A. That concern is what is driving all of our conversations. There is no way any school can say there is no risk, but we can minimize risk. We have masks, hand sanitizers, cleaning products, thermal scanners, etc. on hand now. We're considering installing uv filters on all our air circulation systems. We are also looking at appropriate signage to promote social distancing. We're exploring many different possibilities. We will also install camera equipment in each classroom so if a parent does not want to have their student in the classroom, they can learn virtually.

Q. Tell us about the distance learning program. What have you learned and how will you transition that into next year?

A. We looked at available options and chose Microsoft Teams because it is more secure and offered the best tools. It has been very successful. We are now looking at what tools we can add to the program and in the fall the plan is to make it more interactive and more collaborative/cooperative. For older children, the virtual classroom gives them more responsibility for their learning. For the younger children we want to make it more interactive for them.

When you join HT you learn that we have a "Learning Triangle." The triangle has three sides: parent, school, and student and it calls for a collaborative relationship between all sides. We always seek parental input when we are considering initiatives for the school. We sent out a survey to our current families and asked them about their COVID 19 experiences. Overall, the results were very positive. We received many suggestions and some criticisms. The biggest criticism was that parents wanted more interactive conversations between teachers and students, so next year we will turn on cameras. Parents will have to sign waivers to allow their children to participate in the sessions.

We will probably send out another survey and ask how this worked for parents and what their preferences are going forward.

Q. Are there plans to assist students who may be behind due to restrictions and closures this year. What will the school and teachers do?

A. We're exploring a variety of tools for the fall to have students prepared for the next grade level. Every school is trying to decide what to do. We're considering administering a MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) test virtually to get a baseline of where students are. What is equally important is the social/emotional health of students. As a result of this situation, we have put a school counselor in place now who will work with students who may be struggling or having anxiety issues. We will have a two-prong approach.

Q. How will the school help when both parents have to work? How does Teams allow for virtual learning when parents are not available?

A. We're cognizant of this challenge. All classes are recorded so parents can work with their students later in the day. This is especially important for younger students.

Q. How does the school handle active shooter drills?

A. This year we installed more cameras on both campuses. We do announced intruder drills and practice locking in place. We also talk to our HS Prep students about flight and fight. We have drills four or five times a year. We work with Bowie City and Prince George's County police who have signed off on our plans. We also have security on both campuses in the afternoons because that is the time there are more people coming on campus. We've also installed panic buttons on both campuses in the event an intruder enters the building and that alarm goes straight to the police department.

Q. Has there been thought to delay the start of Kindergarten due to the pandemic?

A. No, there has not. Our teams are working very hard to be ready for the fall. All three divisions will be opening on time in the fall.

Q. Is it possible to get a copy of the distance learning Kindergarten curriculum?

A. This question should be directed to Ms. Weiss for an answer. You will have the opportunity to meet with the division heads at a virtual meeting soon and you will be able to ask them questions directly.

Q. Are there any additional resources for students entering HT?

A. Students will be getting the summer reading, freckle math. HS Prep students have the opportunity to participate in a virtual summer camp called Mapping your Way. Beyond that we have not put anything in place yet. I think the biggest thing young people should do is to be comfortable with the tools they have at their disposal (Microsoft Teams, for example). I encourage families to enroll their children in one of the virtual summer camp.

Q. What kinds of summer camp are there?

A. The summer camp program will launch tomorrow. We will be offering Spanish, science, math, coding, keyboarding, arts and crafts, technology instruction, all virtual. The one I recommend the most for HS Prep students is the Mapping your Way.

Q. What are the expectations for parents of Discovery and Explorer students? What kind of learning environment should we prepare for them?

A. The biggest thing for young children is to keep them engaged. Ms. Weiss and her team have been planning a variety of activities that will help engage them. Parents have been happy overall with the virtual learning for young students but we want to make them more interactive. Getting the younger students on campus is a high priority, but that depends on what happens and the rules we have to follow. Ms. Weiss will be able to address that more in depth in her virtual meeting.

Q. There is concern regarding cleaning and sanitizing the campus. What are the plans for sanitizing and what have you done?

A. Everyone who enters either school must sign in and sign out and indicate where they have been. In the evening, the custodial team cleans all those areas, especially the high contact areas. When we first closed the entire school was cleaned and sanitized. I go in to the school every day, and I feel very comfortable going into the school knowing the school is cleaned thoroughly. The custodial crew has cleaned all surfaces, carpeted and tiled floors, high contact surfaces.

Q. Does camp include an opportunity for preschool children to participate?

A. I do not believe there are any programs for the preschool children. Please check the summer camp information out tomorrow.

Q. How will we plan to teach band and help students grow their musical talents in this situation?

A. When a student enters High School Prep, every student plays an instrument. This will be challenging because of the required distancing. Mr. Hollar, our band director, has been working with Mr. Esposito, Head of HS Prep, on ways to work around this. They are reaching out to all new HS Prep families about instrument choice. It is very difficult to teach a student to play remotely, and right now we don't have a plan in place. Our band program is very strong and our young people are much sought after by high schools.

Q. What kind of investment are we making in our faculty to ensure a solid delivery next year in terms of engagement?

A. We have been talking about this between division heads and our IT department. We will be providing our faculty with professional development over the summer to train them on the new tools we are implementing. We are also making changes in some programs because there are new editions available on line. We will help our teachers be better prepared to use these programs.

Q. Are there tuition options for parents that become unemployed due to the pandemic?

A. The Board of Trustees has created an emergency COVID 19 relief program. Those families who are impacted can apply to the school for assistance. This is a one-time relief fund. We do not want our families to worry about this. If there is a demonstrated need, we will do everything we can to assist those families through this difficult time. We will respond to the needs of our families as best as we can.

Q. There was a tuition increase in Preschool and Kindergarten that includes before care and after care. Will there be any adjustments if school does not resume on time?

A. Yes. We established that this year so that families could have “one stop shopping.” If you are in TDLS you have extended day covered. If we are out of school in the fall that money will be prorated. This will also apply to activity fees.

Q. If school doesn't open on time, will tuition payments still be required?

A. Our intention is to open on time. I cannot think of a reason we wouldn't be.

Q. Will there be a policy of leniency regarding enrollment until a plan is in place to address remote learning and health and hygiene protocols?

A. I don't think we're planning anything like that right now. We're planning to have our program ready, virtual or in place, to meet the needs of the students. The commitments we have received from parents allow us to make a commitment to our teachers, vendors, so we can provide the program you are expecting. We would look at activity fees and extended day fees.

Q. If parents are not feeling comfortable sending their children to campus, will there be the opportunity for the child to learn remotely?

A. Yes, we are working to give options to families. This time has been a great lesson. Parents are demonstrating resilience, how to change, and adapt when dealing with this situation. It is an important lesson.

Q. Are there any electronic devices parents should purchase to get their students?

A. No, I can't think of any. If your student is coming to HS Prep, students will receive a laptop at the start of the school year. All students will be assigned an Office 365 account. My suggestion is to make sure your bandwidth is robust. If you have multiple users in the household and multiple devices, it can become slower.

Q. Has any consideration been given to families who want to withdraw but have already started paying tuition for next year?

A. The commitment you made to us has allowed us to make commitments to our teachers and staff. We need those commitments to be fulfilled because we will fulfill our obligation to you. We do not get any financial help from anyone. We are a tuition driven school and tuition payments only cover approximately 85% of the tuition. We are very healthy thanks to the good fiduciary oversight.

Announcement: There is a COVID 19 page on the school's website with a list of resources available to families. It is a valuable tool.

You will be getting emails from your Division Heads or Ms. Cruz, inviting you to a conversation with your division head who will be able to answer more of the nuts and bolts questions.