Thursday, March 12, 2020

Distance Learning Starts Monday

Dear Athenian Community:

As the coronavirus outbreak unfolds, the wellbeing of our community is our highest priority. In light of this, we have made the difficult decision to move to distance learning effective Monday, March 16. We are well prepared for this transition and anticipate a positive experience for students and faculty. Our current plan is to resume on-campus learning after Spring Break on Monday, April 13.

The next few days at a glance:

**Friday, March 13:**

- Regular school day for Middle School. Students will continue the work they started today with their teachers to prepare for distance learning.
- Upper School students are encouraged to come to campus to pick up belongings needed for distance learning. Morning and afternoon buses will be available for those who need transportation. This is not a time to congregate on campus.
- Upper School faculty will engage in professional development for distance learning.

**Monday, March 16:**

- Distance learning begins Monday, keeping to our regular daily schedule: 8:10 AM - 3:35 PM for both Middle School and Upper School.

*We are not closing school. We are simply shifting the way we teach to optimize the safety of our students and community while delivering high-touch distance learning.*

This is something we’ve been prepared to do for some time. Several years ago, we transitioned to a learning management system, Canvas, which allows for live discussion via chat, video, audio, and much more. Our faculty and staff include many educators with a high level of expertise in the area of distance learning. Those with less experience have embraced the challenge to adapt to new methods of teaching. We were founding members of the Bay Area Blended Learning Consortium (BlendEd), and many of our students have taken advantage of the opportunity to take online courses offered through BlendEd. Finally, our entire faculty has engaged in professional development over the past few days in anticipation of this transition.

This will be an opportunity for everyone — faculty, students and parents alike — to grow and practice resilience together as a community. I am grateful for the outpouring of support expressed by so many of you over the past week. We are blessed to be in this Athenian community. Please stay healthy and please stay in touch.
Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric Feron Niles  
Head of School

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