Monday, March 23, 2020

Dear Parents,

We are so grateful for your continued patience and support as we make adjustments as a community in this time of rapid change.

The school's leadership team has been meeting daily to discuss the latest information. We've been talking to government officials and are looking to other schools and national organizations for guidance. However, this is uncharted territory for all.

Based on our review of currently available information, we are preparing to continue distance learning beyond April 13. We have told our teachers to prepare distance learning classes until May 4, but may need to adjust that date forward or back depending upon how things unfold.

As we look beyond spring break, we will revise our daily schedule to strike a better balance between our desire to cover all of the planned curriculum and the
importance of managing the screen time demands of our new “reality.” This will likely look different in the Middle School and Upper School. You can expect more details from Amy and Lauren before spring break.

Far from campus, our AWE students are 17 days into their journey in Death Valley. What a gift that these students are safely enjoying this experience. Unfortunately, given the current statewide quarantine extending beyond the April 1 Run-In date, Athenian is forced to cancel both the April 1 Run-In (the run itself and the celebration on the field) and the April 2 AWE Banquet. We deeply regret this outcome, yet know it is the only reasonable and responsible choice in this moment.

For now, take solace in the fact that our adjustments have allowed our students to continue their learning -- at home or in the desert -- while keeping all of us safe.

In closing, I’d like to pilot a virtual (Zoom) “Coffee and Conversation.” While I may not have answers to all of your questions, I think all will benefit from an opportunity to connect, see each other's faces, and engage in dialogue. I hope to host one of these every week, beginning on March 31 at 11:00 AM. I'll limit the first one to 15 people, and will vary the day and time to accommodate different parent schedules. You can expect a Sign Up Genius later this week, but in the meantime I’d like to make a call for topics you’d like to discuss. Please send your ideas to news@athenian.org. All important updates will be shared with the entire parent community via email so you will not miss out if you cannot attend one of these Zoom sessions.

Athenian's strong sense of community is our greatest asset. Thank you again for your flexibility and support as we navigate this unique situation.
With gratitude,

Eric F. Niles