



July 31, 2020

Dear families,

While there are so many uncertainties right now, one thing is very certain: We are eager to begin teaching our students! The Governor's recent [Executive Order \(2020-51\)](#) requires that schools notify parents that it is their legal obligation under A.R.S. § 15-802 to ensure that their children are participating in school. The ASA school year begins officially on August 18 with online teaching and learning for all students. This email addresses a variety of relevant issues; I thank you in advance for reading carefully so you are well informed!

Students in all grade levels will follow an A/ B schedule which alternates their academic and arts classes over the course of 4 days. Fridays are still school days; they have a different focus and structure devoted to question/ answer sessions, community building, team check-ins, and individual work time.

If you are looking for alternatives to an at-home online learning environment for your student, we encourage you to check out the opportunities through Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley. They have 18 locations offering Extended Programs for Distance Learning with weekly fees starting at \$60/ week, scholarships available, and teens are free. Click [here](#) to learn more. The YMCA also offers child care options for before and after school days and out of school days. They have 16 branches in the Valley with options; all are listed on their website. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Once it is safe to return to campus, second quarter at the very earliest, students will continue to follow an A/B schedule, coming to campus two days per week on their assigned day. This A/B schedule creates consistency for everyone even when we transition back to campus, and will allow us to provide a careful and safe re-opening when the time comes.

Thank you again to families for their timely completion of the ASA survey requesting information about computer needs and on campus supervision for essential working families. These details provide us critical data so we can work with families to meet student needs. We will need to prioritize the option for on campus learning, so you may need to provide further information as to your specific circumstances. Families who requested a Chromebook will receive it during ASA registration (8/11-8/13). Registration packets will be mailed (not emailed) home on 7/31/2020. Families who need support with internet connectivity will receive communication from Dr. Drew Maxwell, ASA Director of Operations (maxwell@goasa.org).

We know you still have questions. We thank you in advance for your patience as our teaching teams return to work on August 10; they will tailor messages for families based on specific grade level and arts needs- as one message does not fit all grade levels. Our goal is to plan carefully and only then provide clear and accurate information.

With that said, on August 10, teams and departments will begin immediate preparations to communicate directly to families. These details will include:

- Measures of accountability (attendance check-ins during each class period and grading practices)
- Specific grade level schedule expectations and daily schedule
- School supplies - Due to online learning and Chromebook usage, teams are adjusting the required materials accordingly. The first week of school will focus on community building allowing families time to get supplies. We want to ensure families only purchase necessary supplies.
- Additional student support resources and socialization opportunities
- Online after-school programs shared via email the week of 8/10/2020
- Extracurricular activities posted on Canvas after Labor Day

New Covid-19 policies for faculty and students are currently being finalized. Once it is safe to return to campus, we will articulate specific safety measures and added cleaning protocols that will be implemented. Students and faculty will be trained in policies related to social distancing, mask usage, symptom monitoring, campus traffic flow and other issues related to safety so that there is no confusion about how to maintain high standards of safety throughout the day.

For now, we invite you to review some of the adaptations we've made in preparation for the new way we are operating during this pandemic.

Arts

At the end of last school year, our arts faculty reflected on our experience and listened to parent and student feedback. We discussed what we wanted to bring forward for the fall and how we can make a better experience all around. Coronavirus has challenged the performing arts world in big ways. We united on the idea of designing safe performing arts instruction that is relevant with the time and needs of the community. To keep us aligned and unified, we devised our purpose and values and aligned them with our curricular approach.

Purpose:

- Provide a continuous educational performing arts program that is closely connected to the cultural foundations and creative process of each performing art form and develop real world creative experiences through distance learning

Core values:

- Creating, collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and community

Project Based Curriculum:

- Students will gain knowledge and develop skills through carefully structured long term projects that allow them to investigate the creative process, make real world connections, involve student choice, explore cross-curricular collaborations, and learn a variety of arts software programs

Instruction will look different. Instead of focusing on what we can't do, we are looking at what we can do now that we don't have classroom space challenges. The teams are devising new collaborations and applications that are not traditionally possible. Our teachers are also exploring ways to help all students with their art development with space and equipment challenges at home including all theatre, music, and dance disciplines. Our traditional performances will be varied presentations that are unique to each department based on the types of projects students create.

We are energized, excited, and motivated to take ASA arts into this uncharted territory. Together we'll continue to create, collaborate, and build our community.

ASA Technology

ASA has made new investments in technology for this upcoming year to facilitate high-quality learning both in an online and in person environment when we return to campus in the future. This includes the introduction of 10 new software packages to enhance student learning across both our Arts and Academic

curriculum. Finally, we have invested in enough Chromebooks to establish a 1:1 ratio for students regardless of how or where they are learning this year.

New Student Orientation

ASA is so excited to host our New Student Orientation online this year on Friday, August 14th for all new students! The day will include different activities led by ASA Ambassadors for new students and families to meet their teachers and learn more about the ASA experience. Please look forward to an email in the coming weeks with more information about specific times and Zoom links for the day.

Online After-School Programs and Extracurricular Activities

ASA is also excited to continue to offer online after-school programs and online extracurricular activities this fall. Our after-school instructors and staff advisers have been creating new ways to engage with your students in an online environment. You will receive more information about registering for after-school programs by August 10th. Once the school year begins, club advisers will provide more information through Canvas and email about when clubs meet and how students can join.

Additional Student Support and Resources

With a new online format, ASA is committed to continue our support of the whole child through a variety of ways. In addition to continuing our after school programs and extracurricular activities in an online format to support students' social and emotional growth, ASA has created more purposeful connections for students throughout the school day. One way includes adding a daily homeroom to your student's schedule where teachers will check in with students, students will check in with each other, and community building activities will start each day. Fridays will offer another opportunity for each grade level to create community building activities and events throughout the year. The Student Support Team, composed of Vice Principals Liz Clark and Monica Antony, Student Support Specialist Amy Smith, and College Counselor Liz Kuhl, are also all working directly with teachers to help create student experiences that foster social and emotional growth, including mentoring and tutoring programs.

We are working with our website development team to create a one-stop shop for all Covid-19 communication and policies to make it easier for families to access.

As we know all too well at this point, things could change quickly. We need to be nimble and flexible in this environment. We appreciate your understanding and support. We are excited to start our 25th year at ASA and have committed ourselves to continually supporting the exciting learning happening on our campus even in the midst of trying times.

[English recording](#)

Sincerely,
ASA Covid-19 Task Force

Leah Fregulia, Head of School
Sara Maline Bohn, Principal
Liz Clark, Vice Principal Student Support
Monica Anthony, Vice Principal Student Services
Drew Maxwell, Director of Operations
Liz Shaw, Business Director
Jamie Bledsoe, Office Administrator