

July 17, 2020



Letter to Families:

I hope you all are well and finding some ways to enjoy the summer break! Here at ASA we have continued to plan for the upcoming school year. During the past month we have closely monitored the official health trends and data; carefully reviewed CDC, WHO and AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) Guidelines; and monitored the decisions made by local schools. In light of all these considerations and especially the health and well-being of our students, faculty and staff, we have determined that ***the school year will begin with structured online learning for all students on August 18th***. We will remain online through the first quarter and hope to return to school at the beginning of the second quarter (October 19th).

Throughout the first quarter School Leadership and the ASA Board of Directors will closely monitor conditions and will determine if we are ready to return to school using the hybrid model referenced in our last communication by the September 21st board meeting. We will continue to make decisions quarterly throughout the year. Online curriculum will continue to be the primary mode of instruction, on and off campus, to ensure continuity of learning and predictability for our students, families, and teachers.

Alongside our school leaders our academic and arts faculty have been engaged in training and curriculum development that utilizes best practices for online learning and reflects our ASA educational philosophy. We are embracing the opportunity to continue to be an innovative 21st Century learning environment and to find new ways to stay connected with our young people and our families. We also place a priority on ensuring that we are providing equitable access and opportunity for success to all our students.

What will Online Learning look like this year?

Online Learning for Fall 2020 will be different than the online learning opportunities offered during the 4th quarter of last year. Most noticeably there will be:

- daily homeroom for attendance and check-ins
- a consistent daily schedule for academic and arts classes (between regular school hours of 7:45-3:20 – this does not mean they will be online throughout the entire day)
- accountability - students will earn grades and attendance is required
- weekly communication with workload and due dates
- on campus supervision will be available for students who do not have a safe and productive work environment.

During teacher in-service (August 10-14), grade level teams and arts department leaders will send a detailed schedule directly to their students and families to ensure everyone understands how online learning will work including expectations for synchronous and asynchronous sessions.

Exciting news about technology at ASA!

During the summer ASA made a significant investment in our technology for students by purchasing enough new Chromebooks to ensure that every student has access to a Chromebook whenever and wherever they need one. This purchase has allowed us to attain a 1:1 ratio of Chromebooks to students. Students without a computer at home will be able to check out an ASA Chromebook until school returns fully to in person instruction. In addition to our increased investment in Chromebooks, ASA has also purchased ten separate software packages that students and/or faculty will be able to access online. The introduction of new software will significantly increase achievement and accessibility to learning across both our arts and academic classes. Examples include music composition software and video editing software that will enable students to achieve their creative goals in a 21st-century environment.

Next week, ASA will send a survey to all families and students. This survey will gather important information for us regarding student access to technology and gather information about successes and challenges with online learning in the past. Each ASA student needs *their own device* (not phone or tablet) and consistent internet access at home. In our commitment to equity, ASA is here as a partner in your efforts to achieve connectivity during the Fall. Whether that involves checking out one of the new Chromebooks to take home, tech support for how your home internet is routed or advocacy with your Internet Service Provider, ASA will work with your family to ensure that your students have the tools and internet connectivity they need to succeed in this new learning environment.

In the weeks to come, you will receive more detailed information about:

- (1) online learning, schedules, accountability and attendance
- (2) on campus supervision for students who do not have a safe or productive work environment with appropriate sanitation and safety precautions in place for student and faculty safety
- (3) Additional student support and resources
- (4) online after school programs and extracurricular activities
- (5) technology deployment and internet support
- (6) sanitation and safety precautions and procedures for return to school
- (7) the hybrid model we will use to transition back to school

We are deeply appreciative for the number of past survey responses - your perspectives have been essential in helping us shape our plan. While no plan is perfect, we strive to meet the majority of concerns, needs and opportunities we have been presented. Should you have questions or concerns, we are here throughout July.

We miss our students, faculty, staff and families! We can't wait to open school and be with you all again.

Warmly,
Leah

Leah Fregulia
Head of School / CEO