



**THE
MOUNT
VERNON
SCHOOL**

March 12, 2020

March 12 UPDATE: COVID-19

Dear Mount Vernon Family,

Leading through the evolving COVID-19 situation has been an imperfect, unpredictable roadmap for any company, organization, as well as a school like Mount Vernon. I never anticipated navigating a pandemic in my 25-year career in education.

During Spring Break, we continued to monitor the rapid spread of COVID-19 throughout the United States. Following the health experts in the field, reviewing the daily headlines of event cancellations and university closures, and connecting with other Atlanta independent school leaders have led to the culmination of this letter. Ultimately, Governor Kemp's press conference today propelled many independent schools and public school districts to close for a temporary to an indefinite period of time.

Until today, I remained optimistic about returning to school while continuing to communicate with our community (See MV Communications below). It is important to note, monitoring student and staff illness, we are not aware of anyone in the Mount Vernon community who has a confirmed COVID-19 case.

However, after a thorough and thoughtful analysis, The Mount Vernon School will be closed Monday, March 16 through Friday, March 27. While various schools are taking different approaches to the timeframe, Mount Vernon will assess the closure after the first two weeks and provide you with an update to decide whether to extend the Home Learning Plan moving forward. As a result, we ask that students and parents do not come to either campus during these two weeks to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Transitioning, the School has designed a developmentally-appropriate Home Learning Plan for each division to ensure continuity of learning while studying remotely. In order to deploy properly, the School will conduct a professional learning day for faculty and staff on Monday, March 16. The Home Learning Plan will be activated on Tuesday, March 17, and you will be notified with specific instructions. Be sure to note the Resources section below, curating daily and weekly assignments through either Kaymbu (Preschool) or PowerSchool Learning (K-12).

In addition to continuity of learning, we will remain vigilant in monitoring student and staff illness. Each division will have a specific student check-in process and we are requiring compliance during time away from the School. Self-reporting of any illness is paramount to the health and wellness of all within our community.

Of equal importance, the social and emotional health of our students, staff, and our community is a high priority during this unprecedented, evolving situation. Reducing unrest and anxiety, Mount Vernon's Counseling and Academic Support team on both campuses are ready to serve and support our community. The School has provided helpful articles to support your efforts in talking about COVID-19 (See Other Resources below).

Beyond a weekly assessment of the School closing, Mount Vernon has modified other areas of operation:

- All learning expeditions and field trips will be suspended for the next 30 days.
- All domestic and out-of-state student trips and staff conferences will be suspended for the next 30 days.

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- All external experts, college representatives, and other visiting guests will be rescheduled until the COVID-19 pandemic is managed, reducing the spread of the virus.
- Athletic practices and games and arts rehearsals and performances will be suspended during time of closure. Re-evaluation will follow the opening of the School.
- Vendors will be required to drop packages and other deliveries outside of Shipping and Receiving on the Upper Campus or outside of food services areas on both campuses.

Coupled with a historic pandemic, we know a school closure can be stressful to parents, students, and staff members. The administrative team and staff want to make this transition as smooth as possible and will be calibrating this situation with you throughout our time away.

The physical and social/emotional health of our community is paramount. My desire is for our community to cultivate a sense of normalcy for your children and mine in the midst of this crisis. This is what Better Together is all about, serving and supporting each other. As a parent, I join you during an overwhelming and uncomfortable time for our country.

The next update to the School's COVID-19 web page will be Monday, March 16.

Stay safe. Stay healthy.

Praying for a quick return,
Dr. Brett Jacobsen
Head of School