

3/25/20

Dear Great Hearts Arizona Families,

We hope that you are staying healthy and energized during our time away from each other. As promised, we plan to send you a weekly Wednesday update from our Home Office during our distance learning period. Your academy will continue to send more frequent messages about the goings-on at your specific campus.

First, we want to thank you for completing the technology survey that we sent around last week. This allows us to target and refine our approach for online distribution of student work and instruction as we begin to implement Google Classroom over the next few weeks.

We know there are many online support options available to schools. We thank parents for reaching out to share their perspectives on which are best. The decision to use Google Classroom was made at the network level and is consistent in both Arizona and Texas.

Of all the reasons to choose Great Hearts, we know that one of the most wonderful aspects of our schools is the deep relationships formed in a small community. Those relationships are strengthened because of the daily, face-to-face interaction that our faculty and staff share with your children. Though online learning is a poor substitute for real human community, we remain committed to providing opportunities for human flourishing under these unique circumstances. That is why our teachers are working so diligently to craft meaningful at-home work that doesn't tax families, but also allows for genuine exploration of what is true, good, and beautiful while we are apart.

Please note that, while we will begin to rely more on technology for the next few weeks, we will not build an online program that requires students to stare at a screen for hours every day. As a network, we are also making sure that online learning schedules do not present serious conflicts for families with multiple children and/or few devices.

We will, however, allow many options for students to deepen their engagement with their teachers and classmates – via **pre-recorded video**, live small group **tutoring times**, and meaningful lessons. For our families who don't have the devices at home to access this support, our team will be reaching out soon to provide instructions about how to gain access to school devices. If you need a device and do not hear from us by Monday, March 30th, please email us at questions@greatheartsamerica.org to ensure that you receive this service.

Additionally, while we understand that it may be more convenient for students to have their materials (such as items from lockers or textbooks) from school, right now we are prioritizing caution and safety over convenience and cost. For the time being, we will not be distributing students' books, personal supplies, or allowing access to campus.

As a reminder, we remain committed to remote learning through April 10. We have put together a list of places across the Valley such as local counseling, crisis agencies, where to find meals, daycare, supplies, and other resources during this time of closure. Please find that by [clicking here](#), or visiting our website: www.greatheartsamerica.org/coronavirus. We continue to carefully monitor the present situation and work with our local government on updates. Should our closure extend beyond April 10, we will let you know as soon as we have the information.

We appreciate you. Please know that we are here to answer any questions or provide any support you may need. Our Headmasters and their teams are equally as anxious to help you and your child(ren). As we labor – from our homes – for a common purpose, I'm reminded of the insight and beauty of Robert Frost's line in "The Tuft of Flowers": 'Men work together,' I told him from the heart, 'Whether they work together or apart.'

Yours in partnership,

Erik Twist
President, Great Hearts Arizona