

A young girl with long brown hair and a blue beaded headband sits on the floor, reading a colorful book. A young boy in a blue Under Armour jacket sits next to her, also reading the book. They are in a classroom setting with wooden furniture and other children in the background.

PREPARATIONS FOR A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Planning for a safe and an exciting return to learning together

primary day school

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Spring is behind us, giving me time to reflect upon school life in these turbulent days. In every way, I enjoy the great privilege of serving our thriving school. Over the course of my career as a school leader, I have thought myself a teacher, a manager, a coach, a listening ear, a chief mourner and a cheerleader. At Primary Day, my focus on our joy-inspired *Mission* has sustained me — supported by my trust in the strength of relationships and our personal and professional commitments.

As summer envelops us, we look forward to a new school year where unknowns become known, and we respond and adapt to create a familiar and productive learning environment. Our learning, planning, adapting, and preparation are unfolding. At the heart of it, what we all know to be Primary Day is a constant. At a quick glance it may appear different next year, but beneath the surface you will find the familiar specialness of Primary Day, with its distinctive care for each learner and family. Intentionally cultivated, this uniqueness has grown exponentially for decades and embodies all of who we are and inspires our plans for the future.

But what of the here and now? How do we capitalize on the hardiness in our children so as to assure their continued success? What must we do to remain laser-focused on providing *the finest education for the most important years* to all our children?



In conjunction with faculty and staff, along with members of the medical community, I have been working diligently to develop a path forward that allows for flexibility, attention to relationships and the prioritized health and safety of our community. The core assumption of this developing plan, aligned with both CDC guidelines and recommendations in *Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education*, is that children and their teachers will be learning together on-campus this September. Nevertheless, we are preparing for alternative scenarios, including an immediate shift to distance learning if required. A task-force has been charged with delineating specific guidelines for building and program modifications in support of our students.

There are too many unknowns to exactly predict what the school experience will be like in September, but rest assured we are striving for flexibility and transparency in the plans we develop. We are continually monitoring this dynamic situation and its science and circumstances. In concert with a community of educators and administrators, we are rapidly building an experience-base of best practices that are openly shared.

While we are taking every precaution to ensure the physical safety of all, our planning is also grounded in our understanding of wellness — the sum total of empathy, inspired by joy and empowered by trusting relationships.



ON-CAMPUS LEARNING



As educators, we are certain that the very best way to deliver on our promise of the *finest education for the most important years* is in-person on our beautiful campus. But we also know that 2020-2021 could be another uncommon year, so we are planning for any disruption.

We are carefully assessing our facilities and programs with key strategic questions in mind in order to determine access and usage aligned with CDC guidelines and state recommendations. Some of these questions are listed on the next pages to give you an idea of the scope of our planning.





ON-CAMPUS LEARNING

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS: Campus and Community Relations

What...

- Screening procedures will be in place for faculty, children, families, vendors, and visitors?
- Disinfecting and other cleaning routines must we follow?
- Must children/faculty/staff wear in terms of facemasks and/or gloves?
- Tools do we need to manage social distancing with very young children?
- What additional sinks and sanitizing stations are needed?
- What training protocols on new procedures and methods do we need for children and faculty/staff?

How will we...

- Modify arrival, dismissal and recess routines?
- Stagger schedules, employ flexible arrival times or utilize multiple entrances?



ON-CAMPUS LEARNING

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS: Teaching and Learning

What...

- New routines and practices do we need to ensure safety in tandem with student learning?
- Opportunities are there to engage parents and foster culture and community in new and different ways?
- Purposeful steps can we take to prepare students for a potential transition to off-campus learning?

How will we....

- Group and re-group learners for safety and to ensure the integrity of the program?
- Change faculty and staff assignments with social-distancing in place?
- Efficiently deliver after-school and enrichment offerings?
- Schedule learning opportunities to efficiently deliver our comprehensive program?
- Re-imagine use of our outdoor spaces and common spaces?
- Maintain the events and traditions that are Primary Day?

VIRTUAL LEARNING OFF-CAMPUS



Aware that a new phase of COVID-19 could result in a mandated shift to virtual, distance learning, we are building on our experience and feedback from the community, to create an off-campus curriculum of the highest quality that can be launched immediately and offer our students a seamless educational program.

The final weeks of the spring term provided us with opportunities to gauge how very young children performed given an alternate instructional paradigm. While we learned much about their buoyancy in the face of changed circumstances, we also discovered that we must bolster their agency over their learning and support their growth in new and different ways.

In consideration of new possibilities and of delivering services via different means, we continue to ask ourselves important questions as we prepare for the fall semester.





VIRTUAL LEARNING OFF-CAMPUS

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS: Distance Learning

What...

- Are our objectives for off-campus learning?
- Shifts must we make as we pivot to remote curriculum delivery and engagement?
- Technological improvements are needed to enhance and streamline program delivery?
- Supports are we providing to children, families and staff?
- Curriculum adjustments will be necessary moving between virtual and on-campus learning?

How will we...

- Document student attendance?
- Assess student progress?



VIRTUAL LEARNING OFF-CAMPUS



Our virtual curriculum will be accessible via the Primary Day website utilizing a singular platform for program delivery. We are working closely with our web design team to develop the most user friendly page possible, using both Seesaw and Zoom technologies to provide a streamlined access point for parents and students. In addition, we are revising our unit plans to include synchronous (live) instruction with asynchronous (accessible anytime) instruction in a schedule intentionally designed to provide a healthy school/life balance and yet keep our children engaged.

WHAT'S NEXT



As together we chart a new course, active listening, sincere engagement, and forthright dialogue will continue to be essential elements for success. The PDS legacy was forged in a turbulent era and today we are challenged to envision our future in likewise unsettled times.

In addition to our routine summer communications, we will keep you informed of our progress as we continue to develop our plans to re-open campus. Later this summer, once a plan is in place, we'll invite you to a series of virtual town hall meetings with Q&A sessions to address your questions.





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