



Dear SJCA families, students and staff,

I realize that we have sent several messages since this health crisis has started, but every day brings new information, challenges and details. Our goal is to be as proactive, responsive and transparent as possible with our school community. I appreciate your willingness to stay informed and engaged by reading and listening to all of the SJCA communication that is coming your way.

Given Governor Evers latest order that schools close indefinitely, SJCA is extremely fortunate to be able to roll out distance learning. We are truly blessed to have such a dedicated faculty and staff, very willing, able and ready to pivot to a new style of education. Here are some broad details regarding distance learning. You will receive further communication from your children's principals and teachers in the next few days with more specific information.

- **Distance learning will begin at all levels on Monday, March 23rd.** Again, if you do not have internet access or do not have an electronic device, please contact your child's principal or teacher and let them know. Many teachers may have already communicated with their students electronically. Some have already done a few pilot programs. If your student's teacher has not yet been in touch, it is because he or she is getting prepared for virtual learning. Do not worry. All teachers will begin distance learning on Monday, March 23rd.
- **Virtual education will look very different at each grade level and for each subject.** What is appropriate and effective for preschool students will not work for our middle school students or for our high school students. There are many, many online platforms and resources available for remote learning. Our faculty and staff are piloting many of these and will choose what works best for their specific classes. Please trust the expertise of our faculty and staff. After working with them this week and observing their outstanding collaboration, the principals and I have the utmost confidence in their abilities.
- **While there are many methods of delivering remote learning, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction gives some very general guidelines about actual engaged learning time.** SJCA will make sure that our instruction meets or exceeds these guidelines and is fully engaging. Please understand that engaged learning includes independent work, balanced learning and many other meaningful instructional lessons. Also note that remote learning will include all classes including specials and electives.
 - For early learners---1.5 to 2 hours of engaged learning
 - For middle years—up to 4 hours of engaged learning
 - For high school students---5.5 to 6 hours of engaged learning
- **One of the big advantages of remote learning is the flexibility it provides.** While our students will be given a proposed schedule by their principals and teachers, each class will be very flexible due to the uncertainties of each family's situation. If older students are providing child care for their younger siblings, or if children are in a childcare setting that does not lend itself to remote learning, do not worry. All lessons will be recorded and available for family access at a more convenient time. We will be as flexible as possible with delivering remote learning, and ask for your patience and flexibility in return. We know there will be hiccups along the way. We will continually assess and review as we go. Please know that our entire faculty and staff are doing their very best to deliver the highest quality education possible given our logistical constraints.

- **Attendance will be taken each school day** though it may look different at each grade level and for certain classes. Mrs. Witthun will manage attendance at the Upper Campus and Mrs. Santarelli will manage attendance at the Lower Campus. More details will be provided later this week.
- **Distance learning will be meaningful.** Our teachers have done a tremendous job of preparing for this new format for education. The principals and I are in awe of their knowledge, creativity, resourcefulness and willingness to collaborate. In addition, our Director of Technology Mr. Bernhardt has provided steadfast leadership and support to our teachers. We truly feel that, working together, we can make this situation a positive, stressing learning skills like independence, teamwork, and persistence.
- **Grading and assessments may look different.** Until we have a better understanding of exactly how long our students will be learning remotely, we do not have definitive answers regarding third quarter grades, high school GPAs, AP exams and many other questions regarding these issues.
 - For elementary and middle school students, our standards-based grading and focus on learning standards is an enormous positive, as it provides a well-articulated framework for assessing learning.
 - For our high school students, we absolutely understand your concerns. Please take comfort in the fact every other high school in the country is in this same position. Once we get remote learning up and running, our principals and teachers will determine the very best ways to assess learning for both the third and fourth quarters. Once again, we are asking you to trust us, as we navigate the best ways to handle these unprecedented situations.
 - For AP students, please know that we are in close contact with AP. They, too, are in flux, and making real time decisions regarding testing, grading and AP credits. We will keep you apprised of their communication with us, but for now, the best strategy is to assume that AP testing will take place in some form and to continue applying yourself in all of your classes. Remember, it is the AP content knowledge that will be the most useful in college, so continue to work hard in all of your classes.
 - For students with accommodation plans, our learning support specialists are closely involved in distance learning lessons and are reviewing student needs to ensure we support all of our learners. More information regarding accommodation plans will be forthcoming.
- **Pacing is important. This is a marathon, not a sprint.** Given the latest information, we will be engaged in this distance learning model for several weeks. We do not want to overload our families, our students or our teachers. Best practices recommend taking virtual learning slowly and our teachers will heed that recommendation. For most of our students, the first few lessons will be orientation and review. Again, we will assess and refine as we go, but slow and steady is the plan.

Despite the distance, we are and will continue to be one. While our educational experience is stellar, our SJCA family is even more important. Our principals and teachers understand and appreciate the unique community we have at SJCA. They will ensure that their lessons, communication, and experiences respect and embrace our community.

You have my word that SJCA will do everything we can to stay connected, united and together during these uncertain times. Whether it is Mrs. Santarelli doing morning announcements, Mr. Rizzo sending a video message, or Fr. Todd leading our school in prayer, we will create intentional opportunities to be together. Once again, I reference our school theme and emphasize our unity in Christ and each other: ***“So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” Romans 12:5***

Thank you for taking the time to read this lengthy message. We continue to pray for our students, staff and families and humbly ask for your prayers as well.

Be safe and God bless,

Bob Freund