



August 7, 2020

Dear GSA Parents:

As we approach the start of school, I want to update you on some of the decisions we have made regarding our hybrid class schedule and what the beginning of the school year will look like.

The specifics of our health and safety protocols will go out by email next week. We plan to send the normal back-to-school mailing on August 12 or 13, and you should receive it within two to three days. Among other forms and documents, it will include student schedules and information about which group each student is in, Group A or Group B.

How our hybrid model will work

Students will be put into one of two groups by advisory, Group A or Group B. This will allow us to keep our advisories intact while reducing the number of students on campus—and in any classroom—to approximately half of what it usually would be. Group A will have classes on campus Monday and Tuesday, with Group B working from home those days. Group B will have classes on campus Thursday and Friday, with Group A working from home. Each day will start with a short advisory period for attendance and other such things. Everyone will have a fully remote day on Wednesday, with a set schedule.

This plan allows for good continuity (two days in a row in person). Having everyone study remotely on Wednesdays is good practice in case we need to resume remote learning for all during the year (for example, if the public health situation in Hancock County requires it, or we have a confirmed case in our school population and are told by the CDC we should go remote for a few weeks). It also allows all the students in a class to be together virtually one day a week, and gives us a chance for a longer advising period and time for teachers to have virtual office hours for students who need extra help.

Students who will study from home all the time will be assigned to a group. We will record the two days of in-person classes so they can view them, they will have their two days of at-home assignments and activities like all the students, and they will participate on the Wednesday full remote day with their classmates.

Opening days schedule

Because there is so much more for everyone to learn about and get comfortable with this year, we have set aside more time to go over our new systems and protocols, both for faculty and staff, and for students. We will have five professional days for teachers and staff ahead of bringing students to campus. Besides the normal beginning-of-school work we do every year, we will use this time to increase facility with our new online learning platform, go over all our health and safety procedures, and work on expanding our curriculum to include elements addressing issues of racism and inequity in our country.

Initially, we will bring students to campus by grade, which will enable them to be with their entire class at least one day. We will distribute computers before the first full day of classes. Students will be introduced to Canvas, our online learning platform, as well as have initial meetings with their teachers to get started on schoolwork. They also will be trained in our new health and safety procedures and protocols. Having a smaller number of students on campus will make it easier to practice following all those procedures and protocols. It also will allow us to see if any of them need to be modified. As we believe ninth-graders need extra orientation to prepare them for high school, we have set aside two days of orientation for them.

Friday, 9/4: 9th grade only

Monday, 9/7: Labor Day - no school

Tuesday, 9/8: 12th grade only

Wednesday, 9/9: 11th grade only

Thursday, 9/10: 10th grade only

Friday, 9/11: 9th grade only

Begin hybrid model

Monday, 9/14: Group A on campus

Tuesday, 9/15: Group A on campus

Wednesday, 9/16: 100% remote for all

Thursday, 9/17: Group B on campus

Friday, 9/18: Group B on campus

Though getting school up and running is a much bigger task this year, I do believe we will, as always, find our rhythm. And we will monitor how things go and make adjustments as needed, whether large or small.

Timothy J. Seeley
Head of School