

Dear Families,

As we close our 8<sup>th</sup> week of At Home Learning, we hope this update finds your family, extended family and friends healthy and safe. It is hard to believe there are only three more weeks of classes. The passage of time during our Shelter in Place is so different than before. Since we moved to At Home Learning in March, our planning and decision making continues to be rooted in current information and required guidelines. As we have all experienced, the COVID-19 crisis has been constantly evolving and we have all had to pivot multiple times. With each pivot, there is a sense of frustration and loss (which we know you share with us), and then we turn our efforts to reinventing. Our update follows:

### **Summer School and Camp**

For a variety of reasons, we decided to run our Summer School Program remotely, rather than still hold out hope that we can somehow do so on campus as we typically do.

We made this decision carefully, evaluating safety protocols we would need to put in place in order to bring students and employees back to campus safely in July. When we looked at the tasks and timeline necessary to do this - and the fact that many of these procedures have not even been defined by public health officials, coupled with our current Shelter in Place orders, we decided to plan for an At Home Learning Summer School Program instead. We remain committed to planning and providing the best summer school program possible within an At Home Learning model. We communicated this on Friday to the parents who had already enrolled their children in Summer School. If you are interested in learning more about our program, please contact Brian Barish, Director of Admissions, at [bbarish@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:bbarish@charlesarmstrong.org).

We also decided in Friday to cancel our Summer Camp program. The design of our camp program is unfortunately not one that can be provided remotely. This was a disappointing conclusion to reach, but it was the right decision given where we find ourselves in mid-May. Our goal is to bring Summer Camp back better than ever for the 2021 summer.

### **End of the Year Dates**

**Please look at these carefully, as some dates and times have changed. All events will be virtual - with the potential exception of graduation, for which we continue to explore a combination of live and virtual components with Belmont and San Mateo County.**

*For our 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents, we will be sending more details in the next 2 days regarding the dinner and graduation planning, but we wanted the whole community to know our revised schedule.*

5<sup>th</sup> Grade Celebration - Thursday, May 28, 2:00 PM

Closing Ceremony - Monday, June 1, time to be announced

Parent/Teacher Conferences - Tuesday, June 2- Friday, June 5, details forthcoming

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Dinner - Monday, June 8, 5:00-7:00 PM

Graduation- Wednesday, June 10, time to be announced once format is established

Planning is underway for the Art Show and the Musical, more details to follow.

### **Preparing for 2020-2021**

While our team is hard at work continuing to provide the best At Home Learning education to our students over the final weeks of this school year - and determining how to best celebrate our Armstrong graduates - we have also begun preparing for the 2020-2021 school year.

Our Leadership Team, working in close consultation with our Board of Trustees, is creating scenarios for both on-campus learning and At Home Learning. It is important to remember that scenarios are not predictions, but multiple possible futures. We strongly prefer a safe return to on-campus learning, but recognize the decision will be driven by the public health needs of our Armstrong community and broader SF Bay area community. In either case, we will be prepared from both an educational standpoint and logistical/safety standpoint.

How will we do so? We have already identified key aspects of the work and begun developing the action plans to address each aspect. Our relationships with the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and National Business Officers Association (NBOA), as well as their California sub-associations are invaluable. Armstrong is also in active dialogue with our “sister” schools that serve students with learning differences to identify our particular challenges and how to address them. We are not alone in needing to solve these challenges and the collaboration with other schools is extremely helpful. Of course, all of that work is informed by guidance from the CDC and our state and local public health officials, in addition to the San Mateo County School Superintendent’s office. Our role is to take all that information, advice, data, and requirements and tailor a solution that is specifically best for Armstrong. We have begun the work to do so and will plan to announce our comprehensive plan this summer, weeks prior to the start of school.

How can you help? We have received a fair number of suggestions, questions, and offers to help. While we appreciate the interest and understand the anxiety/concern, the best thing for members of our community to do over the next few months as we continue our planning and preparations is to trust us. You brought your children to Armstrong because you trusted that we would provide the best learning environment for their dyslexia and related learning differences. You trusted we would do so in a safe and supportive environment. While our current public health crisis creates a uniquely challenging situation, it doesn’t change the fact that Armstrong and our Leadership Team still has the experience, training, skills, caring, work ethic and resources to best serve your students. Please trust us to do the work and recognize that even the best-intended question or suggestion has likely been asked or raised already by the educational experts who are addressing this situation nationally, locally, and within our school. We’re going to keep focusing on this critical planning work and will not be able to respond to general questions/suggestions as we do so. As always, if you have an individual concern that is truly specific to your own student, you can

address that concern with your teachers or your Division Director. Thank you for your understanding and support.

Looking forward to closing the year with you, and to reuniting in person with you as soon as it is advisable.

Jessica Miller

Head of School

Neil Tuch

Assistant Head of School/CFO