Greetings Highlanders,

Since Thursday’s email update, LHPS has learned more vital information about the current, unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Coupled with additional knowledge from various state and federal authorities, LHPS has adopted the following plan to protect the health and safety of our Lake Highland families while continuing our crucial educational mission:

- LHPS school campuses will now be closed starting today (Saturday, March 14), and will remain closed through Sunday, April 12.
- As communicated late Thursday, Lake Highland’s faculty and staff will report to campus Monday, March 16, and Tuesday, March 17, for continued professional training as we prepare to commence our LHP Learning Continuity Plan (distance learning plan).
- Our Learning Continuity Plan will officially begin Wednesday, March 18, for all PK-12 students.
- All LHP events and activities (athletic, music/art, practices and performances, plus club, co-curricular, and all others) are cancelled through Sunday, April 12.
- Two important LHP webpages have been created to help inform and guide you in the coming weeks:
  - LHP COVID-19 Response
  - LHP Learning Continuity Plan for Distance Learning

Division Directors will send you further details and updates regarding our Learning Continuity Plan no later than 12:00 PM on Tuesday, March 17.

This very tough decision, made in an unprecedented, rapidly evolving environment, reflects our primary focus on the health and safety of our families. We are sorely disappointed that the situation is causing so much disruption and sadness for many, and especially for the Class of 2020 (and their family members) for whom the final months of high school are uniquely special. To our May 2020 graduates who have been looking forward to end-of-year celebrations and final commemorative events prior to college transitions, this is very difficult news. To parents, thinking through the impact this decision will have on your families, we appreciate the challenges this next month or so will present. And to our dedicated faculty and staff, who are shifting to a distance learning model under high-stress circumstances, I recognize the extraordinary demands placed on you and appreciate your unwavering commitment to our students and their success.

For all, I specifically ask that you refrain from generating and disregard what will certainly be myriad rumors…most of which will be untrue. For starters, let me assure you that, at this point,
no one has cancelled school for the rest of the year, Baccalaureate Dinner, or Graduation. Finally, please understand that we are fully committed to keeping you up-to-date on the latest status of all upcoming changes on a timely basis, and will do our utmost to return school life and Highlander traditions to a more stable and predictable pattern of operations as soon as possible.

As we commence this uncharted journey into distance learning options, our faculty and staff members are boldly optimistic about what this will ultimately mean for our school and our students. To be sure, this venture will propel LHP to the forefront of distance learning capabilities for independent schools, and potentially open heretofore unavailable learning opportunities for home-bound or medically burdened students, and for traveling scholars, athletes, musicians, thespians, debaters, scouts, or other LHP activity and club students. Whereas there will predictably be some growing pains as we launch and gain experience in this domain, it is the core of many future learning opportunities, especially with regards to collegiate and lifelong learning initiatives. As pioneers in this venture, Highlanders working through the next several weeks will help shape and prove a new and distinctively unique Highlander capability that will further establish LHP as the best prep school in central Florida and beyond. Thank you in advance for your support, positive feedback, and patience as we commence these operations.

In addition to furthering the growth, development and success of an already outstanding Highlander educational program, each of us also has a responsibility to do our part to restrict social interactions as much as possible during the next several weeks. Our school’s closure will be successful and most effective if accompanied by effective social distancing measures which are proven to diminish the spread and consequences of this pandemic. If students or employees choose to gather in large, ad hoc groups outside of school, they will defeat the purpose of this proactive measure and undermine the potential success of our safety and educational initiatives. We encourage everyone to be creative amongst themselves and with their children and come up with safe, alternative ways to socialize and connect with friends.

In the coming weeks, we have the opportunity to bring our best selves forward, grow personally and professionally, and continue fulfilling our mission to lead, serve, persevere, and accomplish. Although we will not be together on campus, we will be together in spirit, and we will always be united as Highlanders.

You and your families are in our thoughts and prayers, and on behalf of the entire senior leadership team, I wish you continued health, happiness, and safety. God bless you all!

Alfred G. Harms, Jr.
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