Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs School Committee Report
April 2020

Wow! As I look back at my March report, I am struck by what a difference a month makes. So much has happened and so much has shifted after the governor's announcement to close in person schooling in our state. I have been so impressed with our faculty and their willingness to jump in with both feet give their best to the students and families while learning new platforms and ways of teaching. Remote learning and the world's pandemic has changed the work load, the emotional response, and connections for all: parents, faculty, and students. We are trying to support our community at this time in these unchartered waters.

Remote Learning

During March break I began reaching out to other Friends School, and regional schools to learn what they were doing to shift to remote learning, and utilizing resources from NAIS and VAIS. On March 13 we sent everyone home with all their books and materials. On March 16 we held a PD day for faculty, we discussed what would be expectations for students in our remote learning and platforms we would be using. On the 17th, teachers held their first virtual morning meeting on Zoom or Seesaw, and parents came to pick up their materials. On the 17th we began Friends Remote Learning. By the end of the second week we had learned from the governor this would not be temporary but long term through June. We held another PD for teachers at this point to discuss what was working by age group and give more training on Zoom and share responses to parent feedback.

What does Friends Remote Learning Look Like?

We have focused on ensuring a mix of in-person community learning and connection, with learning and activities that happen on the student and family's schedule. The whole school is using Zoom in some format for in person meetings and classes. In the lower school we are using SeeSaw to share videos and post responses to teacher questions and activities. In Middle and Upper School we are using Google Classroom and Jupiter to share activities as well as a regular abbreviated schedule of classes on Zoom. I would invite you to look at this document that I shared with Faculty for our last PD day to help you understand how faculty have responded to our remote learning after 2 weeks, and to see what direction I have asked faculty to take.
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX-1vReYpeajqIdbIeVyzit0Tgosj3tAA9PBUAQ6YJLyXEVtTyHqFclX6Wc1oYG_Au9ttVJhqd0g8Aiko5f/pub?start=false&loop=false&delayms=15000

You also can see an overview of our program in each division by going to our website.
https://www.vbfschool.org/distance-learning-resource-hub/

3rd quarter Report Cards and Parent Teacher Conferences

Due to this time of transition, we pushed back the end of the quarter by a week. Teachers will be holding parent teacher conferences via zoom this time around. We also invited parents to include their student if they would like to. 3rd Quarter Progress Report cards with comments in the Middle and Upper School are going out via Jupiter. Lower School Parent Teacher Conferences happened during the week of April 6th. Middle and Upper School conferences will happen the week of April 14th after they have read their student's report card.

Next year's Seniors

We have finalized class options for Seniors next year, and I met with Virginia Wesleyan University to confirm the possibility of Dual Enrollment for our students. We held a meeting for senior parents and students and are now receiving their requests for classes next year.

Hiring teachers for next year

We have a hiring committee, Kristyn Brown-Moore, Tieshia Ridley, Kate Keiser, Sandra Fink, Mike Barclay and myself that has begun reading resumes for our Pre-K lead teacher and our Kindergarten Assistant Teacher next year. We hope to interview semi-finalists by phone in the next 2 weeks and then have zoom visits the final week of April. Then make a recommendation to Mike by Early May.

Meeting for Worship-

We are now holding weekly meetings for worship with Zoom. This has been a chance to involve families in worship and to stay connected in community. I invited members of Virginia Beach Friends Meeting to join our school worship. And then joined Whit, Linda, Jeanne and Natalie in starting Zoom meetings with Virginia Beach Friends Meeting. It has been a terrific collaboration.