

Dear Fuqua School Families,

Each morning for the last week I have arrived on campus in accordance with my normal routine. I have gotten settled into my office, and at 8:10, my normal cue to head down the hill for morning handshake, I have had to catch myself and remember that our faculty and students will be teaching and learning, respectively, from home. We are all creatures of habit, and in the moments when I have to remind myself we are doing things differently for the foreseeable future, I have wondered how long we will be in this state of flux.

Today Virginia Governor Ralph Northam answered that question by announcing both private and public school campuses in Virginia will remain closed for the rest of the school year. Even though I knew this was a possibility and increasingly becoming the more likely course of action, the Governor's news was still a blow to me as I am sure it will be to all of you. I am especially disappointed for our seniors who were looking forward to all of the special celebrations and unique moments that accompany their transition from students to alumni.

Over the last week the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Team have been working continuously and in conjunction with local partners to determine how best to proceed in the event school campuses were closed for the remainder of the year. Meanwhile our teachers have been fully committed to providing continuous and meaningful learning for our students. We will remain engaged in this work over the next few days, and before the end of the week I will be reaching back out with more information about how we will proceed in the weeks and months to come. The key elements of our plan will include measures to ensure our students continue to receive the best possible education in the current circumstances and to make sure our students are not penalized for a situation that is totally beyond their control. Continuing and improving distance learning and exploring other options we will have to continue instruction and conclude the school year in a manner that prepares students to advance to the next grade level will be our primary focus.

The Governor also announced the following 30-day restrictions:

1. all recreational businesses will be closed;
2. non-essential businesses will be expected to practice social distancing with all patrons;
3. and all gatherings will be restricted to 10 or fewer people.

While these measures will undoubtedly create new challenges for all of us, the Governor's call to action is intended to protect all of our citizens. It is incumbent upon all of us to follow this example as we navigate an unprecedented time in the history of our school. And we will do so in a manner that reflects our core values and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to being a good neighbor and partner with other organizations in the greater Farmville area.

I want to thank the entire school community for their understanding and support as we make informed decisions based on the most accurate and current information.

Stay well,  
John Melton  
Head of School