
From: Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School

Sent On: 03-27-2020 15:24:27

Subject: Parker Weekly Community Email

Parker Weekly Community Email for Friday, March 27, 2020

“...Schools have to have a collective culture, a “moral order,” but one which is in balance with individual autonomy...The moral order is voluntary; the adults and students are partners in its creation and maintenance. Both students and teachers see the point of schooling. In small and voluntary associations, shared norms emerge which make it unnecessary to devise elaborate sets of rules. The rules that last come out of environments, not books. The relationship between the needs of the community and individual freedom is not something arbitrarily imposed; it is, rather, arrived at through explanation, exploration, and persuasion. In a school, this is difficult to do...”

Ted & Nancy Sizer, *The Students Are Watching: schools and the moral contract* (Beacon, 1999)

Parker Families:

As we wrap up Home Learning Week 2, I continue to be proud of the efforts Parker teachers are making to design home learning, the level of engagement students are showing, and the investments parents are making to support student engagement. I think it’s fair to say that not since the founding months of the school—way back in 1995—has so much of what Parker seeks to be and become been visible as we partner with students and families in real time to create and maintain a different way of doing school.

And it’s a stretch for all of us. We’re having to learn new ways of structuring our days, new ways of collaborating, new ways of supporting each other. It’s inherently stressful. To say nothing of the fact that we’re doing all of this during a pandemic. Please take care of yourselves.

Parents, when you take the time to offer teachers your warm feedback, it makes such a difference right now! Thank you for taking the time. Here’s an example from Week 2:

“...I am not only thankful for what you have done, but I am also extremely impressed! Within just the first couple of days, you offered a clear and thoughtful plan as to how you would move ahead. It was straight-forward, yet comprehensive, and set the stage for a methodical blueprint to follow. At the height of the chaos and uncertainty, it was reassuring to see that the Parker community was able to offer something familiar and stable. From what I can see, and based on feedback from my kids, the teachers have done a phenomenal job of engaging with the students and advancing a legitimate curriculum...”

Here are the main topics in this email, some of which are also addressed in [this short video](#):

- Campus Closure Extended to May 4
- June Gateways and Graduation
- Why Not Vacation?
- Ongoing Adjustments for Home Learning
- Technology Support During Home Learning
- Library Services During Home Learning
- Mental Health and Emotional Well Being
- A Word from Nurse Lisa
- Other Assorted Announcements

Be safe and well, [Todd](#).



Campus Closure Extended to May 4th

On Wednesday afternoon, Governor Baker extended the period of school campus closure to May 4th as part of the overall effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. He asked district public schools and charter public schools to make learning available to students during campus closure using technology and other resources.

Gateways and Graduation

We realize that extending the period of campus closure raises questions for seniors planning to graduate and students who were planning to hold their Gateway Exhibitions in June. We know those questions are producing additional anxiety and worry, and that’s not great. For now, the single best thing students can do is to “pick up what we’re putting down,” to engage with the learning teachers are making available. Parker now knows that we have to plan for Gateways and Graduation under two distinct scenarios: a return to campus on May 4th and a return to campus in August (should the closure be extended through this school year). We will have a first draft of these plans NEXT WEEK.

Why Not Vacation?

A Division 2 student made these observations on Wednesday:

“(A) I am contacting you in regards of schools being closed until May 4th. (B) I feel that as a student the home learning school work should be significantly lowered or not required at all. (C) I know many students that feel very stressed and are overwhelmed by the long quarantine and the school work isn't helping. (D) I also feel that lots of students are just going crazy not being able to see their friends and they would like to be able to relax and not have to worry about school work. (E) I as well as many students have been feeling this way and I wanted to bring it to your attention.”

In response:

- (A) Governor Baker extended the closure of *school campuses* while simultaneously asking districts to continue making learning available to students. Campus is closed. School is open.
- (B) We're hearing similar comments from other students and teachers are making adjustments for Week 3 and beyond.
- (C) The COVID-19 pandemic and quarantines are incredibly stressful for all of us. For many students, having school work and learning opportunities available through Home Learning provides meaningful structure and stability that reduces stress. Finding the right level of engagement, as an individual, is probably key.
- (D) Social distancing is difficult for many of us, and terribly important in slowing the spread of COVID-19. Let's focus on staying connected as best we can, knowing that it will be a while before we're taking laps or playing in the Outback. Advisors are creating opportunities for their groups to gather virtually, and choosing to attend is a first step in staying connected to schoolmates. Teachers are also working on ways to make Home Learning more social and interactive.
- (E) Thanks for speaking up! It's so important that we communicate clearly and often as we undertake this journey together.

Key Learnings and Ongoing Adjustments

Our teachers made their initial plans for Weeks One and Two of Home Learning back when we thought school might be out for just two weeks. With Governor Baker's announcement on Wednesday afternoon, it's clear that we'll be engaged in Home Learning until May 4th, at least. Both the federal and state Departments of Education are very clear that schools should be actively engaging students in ongoing learning, and that is what we are doing. We are all learning how to do this as we go, and we appreciate both the gratitude and the feedback you have sent our way. In particular, we know that you want more videos and more interaction. One parent sent an email saying, "the process of remote learning has further reinforced for me the fundamental principle that learning is a social process." We totally agree, and we are trying to figure out how to do school in as Parker-like a way as we can. Each week, we will add and adjust our lessons in response to what we are hearing from you all and the new technologies we are learning as fast as we can. On Monday, we will share more information about adjustments beyond Week Two.

Technology Support During Home Learning

Students can access technical support from Travis and Wesley from home by emailing helpdesk@theparkerschool.org or [Setting up a Remote Support Session](#). School-issued laptops are still available to students, particularly those who usually use a Chromebook and/or those whose personal devices are requiring a lot of technical support. PLEASE, if you are experiencing challenges with your personal device and/or experiencing stress from sharing a device with siblings or other family members, sign up to get a school-issued device. Click here to complete a [Laptop Request Form](#) and here for the [Hotspot Request Form](#). Travis and Wesley will work with you to arrange pickup.

Access Office applications on personal devices:

Teams – [Android](#) | [iOS](#)

OneNote – [Android](#) | [iOS](#)

OneDrive – [Android](#) | [iOS](#)

Office (Word PowerPoint Excel) – [Android](#) | [iOS](#)

Windows/Mac: Download from <http://portal.office.com>– login using your Parker credentials and use the “install office” link in the top right corner

Parker’s Digital Library

Join thousands of readers around the world in the largest book club during [Big Library Read](#). Engage with other readers with the same title at the same time. From now until April 13, you can enjoy stand-up comic Michael McCreary’s hilarious yet insightful memoir, [Funny, You Don't Look Autistic](#), from Parker’s e-book app (Sora) or your public library’s app (Libby) as an e-book or audiobook with no waitlists or holds. The Parker School community can join by visiting the Parker Library webpage (look for Sora) or by downloading the [Sora app](#), then discuss online at <https://discuss.biglibraryread.com/>.

Funny, You Don't Look Autistic is stand-up comic Michael McCreary’s memoir in which he points out that autism "looks" different for just about everyone with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Diagnosed with ASD at age five, McCreary got hit with the performance bug not much later. During a difficult time in junior high, he started journaling, eventually turning his pain into something empowering—and funny. This unique and hilarious #OwnVoices memoir breaks down what it's like to live with autism for readers on and off the spectrum. *Funny, You Don't Look Autistic* is an invaluable and compelling read for young readers with ASD looking for voices to relate to, as well as for readers hoping to broaden their understanding of ASD. Here’s the [Readers Guide](#).

A message from School Counselor, Sheila Kelly:

The theme of this week is self-care. Please consider using apps such as *Headspace* and *Calm* as a way to de-stress and practice mindfulness. Here’s suggestions on [The Best Meditation Apps](#) from Wirecutter. As another option, a Parker parent submitted information about the ever-popular class on happiness at Yale, which is now being offered free of charge. Here’s more information about [‘The Science of Well Being’](#).

This week, my message from the counseling office is directed to parents. You can access it here: [Note from Sheila with Thoughts for Parents during Home Learning](#)

Last week's message gives students tips about self-care and can be accessed here: [Note from Sheila to Students during Home Learning with Ideas for Staying Emotionally Healthy](#)

Please let your students know that if they would like to set up a video conference or a phone call, they can do so by emailing skelly@theparkerschool.org

A message from School Nurse, Lisa Zick, to our Parker Family:

Being the school nurse isn’t just caring about the physical health of our Parker family, it is about the overall well-being of our Parker family. Please read my message for this week here:

[Note to Families from Lisa during Home Learning](#)

New Deadline for [ECO RaffleBasket](#) Fundraiser is April 10th

We’ve extended the deadline so you don’t miss out on picking which raffles you'd like to try to win from the comfort of your own laptop, phone, or computer!! [Click here for THE ONLINE ECO RAFFLE!!](#) Questions? Contact Katrina at ktedstone@theparkerschool.org

Reminder: Order your Parker yearbook now! Deadline is Friday April 3rd

Please complete the [form linked here](#) to order your yearbook today. Payment can be made by mailing a check made out to “Parker School” and mailing it to the school or by paying online through [Unipay](#). Contact Ashley Wood at awood@theparkerschool.org with questions.

Questions?

If you have a question about:	Please contact:
a specific class or assignment	the teacher of that class (see Parker email list here)
our approach to Home Learning (or ideas to share!)	email homelearning@theparkerschool.org
technical support	email helpdesk@theparkerschool.org
If you need to share information or access services about:	Please contact:
your family's health information	email lzick@theparkerschool.org
mental health/emotional support needs	email skelly@theparkerschool.org
food insecurity/free and reduced school lunch needs	email mmckenna@theparkerschool.org

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