



St. Gregory the Great Academy

A Ministry of the Church of St. Gregory the Great

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Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

Mrs. Michele L. Rivera, Assistant Principal

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 24, 2020

TO: All Parents, Faculty, and Staff

FROM: Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

RE: **Operational Update #20**

As much as I tried to prevent the eventuality of needing to move to whole school remote instruction, as the situation unfolded over the past week we had no choice aside from taking the course that we did. Certainly, as evidenced by several school districts around us moving to complete remote instruction until mid-January, the challenges to in-person instruction are layering quickly. These challenges include: 1) Maintaining safety in terms of COVID-19 infection; 2) Cases of COVID-19 infection among students and staff rising; 3) The inability of the school to control high-risk behaviors outside of school; 4) Having sufficient staff able to be physically present in school in light of illness and quarantine; and 5) Trust. Unfortunately, we are not immune from any of these factors and we are at a point where difficult decisions need to be made. I will acknowledge right off the bat that some will disagree with what I am going to outline for next week, and I respect that the plan may not be ideal for your family. The bottom line, however, is that I need to consider the 298 families of our students as well as the almost 50 families of our staff. In light of these considerations, below please find the plan for the week of November 30th:

Please note the following updates:

101. Remote Instruction for Several Grades – For the week of November 30 – December 4, **Preschool 3 – Grade 4 will be in-person while Grades 5-8 remain remote.** There are several reasons for this decision:

- a. Grade 7 and core subject teachers who teach Grade 7 must quarantine through December 2.



- b. Each of the teachers who teach Grade 7 also has classes with Grades 5, 6, and/or 8. We do not have sufficient staff to cover the necessary 5th, 6th, and 8th grade classes in-person even if the quarantined teachers presented remotely. The ability to cover the absence of other staff members must also be considered.
- c. Grades 1 and 3 have already missed an additional two weeks of in-person instruction; therefore, it is a high priority to restore these grades to in-person instruction as possible.
- d. Given the current status of the pandemic, there is wisdom in further reducing the total occupancy of the buildings at this time. This reduced occupancy will also allow for strict separation of the grade levels indoors (i.e. spread the grades out).
- e. While there are certainly several exceptions to this assertion, older children are more adept at remote instruction than younger ones in general.

Again, while I am well aware that some (many?) will not like this plan, this represents a viable way to return to some in-person instruction.

102. **Abbreviated Schedule** – We will use the **Abbreviated Day** schedule, with dismissal at 12:50 pm, for Preschool-Grade 4. At this time, bus transportation at dismissal is set to occur for all routes. If something changes, the specific students affected will be contacted. Grades 5-8 will continue to use the Remote Schedule (this is a change from what was previously announced); HOWEVER, if there is a time conflict for a co-curricular class scheduled for Preschool 3 – Grade 4, the Grade 5-8 co-curricular class will be canceled.

103. **What Could Go Wrong?** – Be aware that there are factors that could make this partial in-person plan unworkable, thus requiring whole school remote instruction to continue. Specifically:

- a. We will have no choice except to comply with a state-wide school closure order
- b. Additional cases of COVID-19 could emerge in our student body or staff
- c. Staff available for in-person instruction could fall below the minimum necessary for safe school operation.

Thus, while I am hopeful that this will work, please be prepared for the cancellation of in-person school for all grade levels at any time. Unfortunately, I just cannot predict what is going to happen.

104. **Week of December 7** – The truth is that I do not know. We will continue to try to eke out some in-person instruction as long as we can and it is safe. I will provide a tentative outline by the middle of next week.