



March 24, 2020

Dear Blue Ridge Parents,

Wherever you are, I hope that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy.

Yesterday, Governor Northam announced that all public and private schools throughout Virginia will remain closed through the end of the school year.

In my last letter, I wrote that I was hopeful that the boys could finish the school year on campus. I am so sorry to say that, following the governor's announcement, our campus must remain closed through at least the end of May. My heart goes out to all of you, and to all of our boys. For our tightknit Blue Ridge Family, the disappointment of concluding the school year apart is especially acute.

Despite the news, we remain committed to delivering the very best of Blue Ridge to our boys and to encouraging the connections that knit together our family. To this end, teachers continue to generate great ideas for creative and fun ways to engage and educate their students. The distance learning program will continue through the end of the school year. I've been in close contact with representatives from the Virginia Association of Independent Schools and the Virginia Council for Private Education. Our distance learning plan meets all of their criteria, so BRS students are assured academic credit for courses concluded this school year.

What's more, I've heard from so many Blue Ridge boys and parents, saying that the Zoom sessions are helping our community to stay connected. Soon, we'll be adding more programming to strengthen our connections. You'll hear from Vinton Bruton about how spring sports teams will meet with coaches through Zoom, and about plans for physical fitness challenges to keep our boys active. We will also soon announce plans for whole-school gatherings like weekly assemblies and Chapel services. In the weeks ahead, it'll be more important than ever to sustain the Blue Ridge community, to keep our boys connected and healthy.

It will also be important for parents to have such outlets, so I'm happy to announce that soon you'll hear from Sherry Sinor and the Parents Association about Zoom sessions designed specifically for various groups of parents. In recent days, I have heard from many of you. I have been grateful for those who've sent thanks for things like the online classes and for those who've confided in me that these times are especially difficult. More than ever, we need to stay in close contact and pull one another up and through this global health crisis.

I want to include a quick note to parents of seniors: we are considering an alternate date for Commencement, possibly in late July. It would of course be contingent on the status of the virus and whether it would be safe by then to bring us all back to campus. The faculty and Board of Trustees support the idea wholeheartedly. This senior class deserves the chance to jump in the lake together in celebration of the Rite of Passage that is the BRS Graduation!

At this stage, it is important to note that we have every intention of opening the 2020-2021 school year on campus on September 1st. Planning for that is already well underway and is a bright light at the end of this tunnel.

I'll be back in touch soon with more information about plans for handling the boys' belongings here on campus, among other important logistical matters. I hope you will reach out to me to let me know how you and your family are doing. I am available and eager to assist you in any way possible.

I extend continued hopes and prayers that you and your families will remain safe and healthy.

My warmest regards,

Trip Darrin
Headmaster
434-992-0511