



May 8, 2020

Dear Parents,

Greetings from campus!

It has been a few weeks since the flurry of correspondence at the outbreak of this pandemic. I hope that you and your loved ones remain safe and healthy.

The Blue Ridge community is greatly heartened by the way students, teachers, and parents have worked together these past seven weeks. With safety as our shared priority, we have worked together to sustain the education of our boys. Yet, we remain cognizant of the seriousness of the virus and its impact on health and financial well-being, and the uncertainty about the future that we all feel.

While these realities create more questions than answers, more than ever I am confident that our community – together – will face the challenges and emerge from them as strong as ever.

Right now, our primary focus is on finishing this year strong. Only two weeks to go! I am grateful to you and the boys for hanging in there with us. I know it has not been easy, especially with so many other schools closing early or dramatically lightening the workload. The Blue Ridge response to distance learning comes from our commitment to the boys and their education. We plan to keep the learning meaningful and thorough up through the end of the year on May 22nd, while being mindful of the stress levels of the students.

Part of the strong finish will be several important ceremonies and events over the final week of this school year:

- **Tuesday, May 19 – Honors Service**, during which we will announce next year's student leaders and celebrate great citizenship among the student body. This service will, as in previous years, be for students and faculty only. Later that week, we will share results via email and social media.
- **Thursday, May 21 – Student Work Showcase**, featuring a collection of some of the best and most creative work completed by students through the distance learning

program. This event will be open to parents and families and I hope you will join us online. A link to this showcase, along with more specific details, will be sent soon.

- **Friday, May 22** – the final day of classes. The day will conclude with the last “Un-sembly,” which will include the **Academic Awards** ceremony. This ceremony will also be open to parents and families and a link sent to you soon.

The biggest part of our strong finish will be Commencement 2020. The Graduation Task Force of students and teachers is continuing preparations. I am excited about these developing plans and a separate letter will go out to parents of seniors early next week. I want to thank the members of this task force and thank senior parents for offering great feedback and input.

This month, our “Safe Opening Task Force” will finish some important work. This group of BRS teachers and school leaders is establishing several contingency plans for how we will safely open for Fall 2020. We are committed to and will be ready for a safe opening here on campus as scheduled on September 1, 2020. In early June, I will write to you again and share specifics about our plan. In the meantime, if any returning families have questions about next school year, please reach out to me.

This has been a difficult time. When I check in with individual students and parents, I am humbled to see such resilience and determination in the face of extraordinary circumstances. My own personal challenges pale in comparison, yet I have found great support through connecting with you and others in the Blue Ridge School community. Thank you. I am grateful for our community and I know we will continue to lean on each other to see these present challenges to a close.

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

My warmest regards,

Trip Darrin
Headmaster