

March 30, 2020

Dear SJA Families,

I hope this letter finds your family in good health and spirit. The past couple of weeks have been a time of growth, transition and collaboration, and we want to extend our thanks to each of you for your patience and understanding. There are still so many uncertainties, but we continue to plan and adapt according to what is best for our students.

While our campus may be closed and our student body is not physically present at SJA, learning is ongoing through our distance learning program. That said, we would like to introduce the **academic schedule we will implement beginning Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>**.

### **WHAT IS SJA DISTANCE LEARNING?**

Distance learning days allow teachers to provide instruction to students virtually. This may include assignments posted via Canvas, individual or group work completed in Google (Docs, Sheets, Forms, Slides, etc.), viewing a short video and responding, discussion boards, real-time video conferencing with Zoom, and flipped classroom lessons.

One advantage of distance learning is not only does it guarantee continuity of instruction and learning, it also better prepares students for college classes as collegiate courses expect online learners to be engaged and present in the learning environment. The distance learning format we are using meets all TEA and TCCBED requirements for online instruction.

### **WHAT IS THE DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE?**

SJA distance learning days will follow the scheduling format listed below on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. **Classes will not meet on Tuesdays giving teachers an opportunity to collaborate and students the chance to catch-up with assignments.**

- Periods 1, 2, 3 and 4 will meet virtually on Mondays and Thursdays
- Periods 5, 6, and 7 will meet virtually on Wednesdays and Fridays

<b>TIME</b>	<b>Monday/Thursday</b>	<b>Wednesday/Friday</b>
8:30-9:30 AM	1 <sup>st</sup> period	5 <sup>th</sup> period
10:00-11:00 AM	2 <sup>nd</sup> period	6 <sup>th</sup> period
11:30-12:30 PM	3 <sup>rd</sup> period	7 <sup>th</sup> period
1:00-2:00 PM	4 <sup>th</sup> period	tutorials

### **WILL WE HAVE AN EASTER HOLIDAY?**

The answer is yes! Everyone is expected to unplug and not do anything school-related between Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>-Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. Take those days to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and spend quality time with your family. **Classes will resume online on Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>.**

### **ARE STUDENTS EXPECTED TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE?**

For students to learn and grow, full participation in each distance learning class period is required. Students will receive the same level of instruction and interaction with their teachers that we have come to expect during a traditional school day.

- Teachers are all available to answer students' questions throughout the duration of the 60-minute class period either in real-time via Zoom, Discussion Board, various apps or via email communication. **All teachers will be available to students on Wednesdays and Fridays from 1:00-2:00 PM for additional support and Tuesdays by appointment.**
- Please be aware that teachers have other classes and responsibilities, so their availability outside of your student's assigned class time may be limited.
- Students who are not completing work after two class periods, will be contacted by the teacher via email. The email will include parents/guardians, the Principal and the grade level counselor.
- Students who choose not to join real-time classes or students who have missed three consecutive assignments will be referred to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will communicate this information with the parents and student, as well as share it with the Principal.
- When participating in online video-conferencing (video communication and chats), all students must wear school appropriate clothing and use school appropriate language.

### **WHAT IS THE EXPECTATION REGARDING ASSIGNMENTS, ASSESSMENTS, AND FEEDBACK?**

For this program to be successful, both the teachers and the students have roles in the process, and the information exchange between them is critical for learning to occur. Outlined below are the expectations for how we will navigate the exchange of information.

1. Teachers will have the week's lesson plans and handouts available to students on PlusPortals no later than 8:30 AM on Mondays.
2. Classes that meet in real-time do not have to meet for the entire 60-minutes. A teacher might provide instruction for 15 minutes, and then ask students to complete an assignment. Teachers

will be available for the entire 60-minutes, but it does not mean they will be providing direct instruction for the entire time.

3. Teachers can have assignments due or assessments due by: (1) the end of the class period, (2) the next meeting date, or (3) a future date. Teachers will be specific in what they post and deadlines will include the date and time.

4. Teachers are aware that providing feedback to students in a timely fashion is critical, and even more so in a distance learning environment. Once students submit work, teachers will provide feedback and where applicable, a grade to the student by the start of the next class period unless it is a paper or project.

5. Students who are having issues submitting assignments should reach out to the teacher via email.

### **WILL STUDENTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS RECEIVE SUPPORT?**

Students with a Saint Joseph Academy Accommodation Plan are entitled to their accommodations. Teachers will be mindful of the pacing of their courses in creating assignments, activities, and assessments for students with accommodations, and they will work to mirror their current course expectations. Teachers were reminded that when making decisions about students with accommodations, they need to consider whether the problems a student might be having are a result of excess work-flow or a lack of understanding of content. Should you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Mrs. Ida Saenz at [isaenz@sja.us](mailto:isaenz@sja.us) with accommodation questions or needs.

### **ARE COUNSELORS STILL AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS?**

Our counselors are available and accessible via email daily from 8:30 AM – 2:00 PM. Should you need to reach your guidance or college counselor for any reason you can email them directly. The counselors are available to work with students regarding academic concerns, college advising, and any other concerns they have.

### **CAN WE STILL REGISTER OUR STUDENTS ONLINE FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR?**

Yes. The regular registration period has been extended to April 30, 2020. In other words, there will be no late fee if you register your child anytime during the month of April. Families who are experiencing hardships as a result of COVID-19 are asked to contact either Michael Motyl [mmotyl@sja.us](mailto:mmotyl@sja.us) or Melissa Valadez [mvaladez@sja.us](mailto:mvaladez@sja.us).



### **CAN WE CONTACT THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION?**

It goes without saying that the administration team is available daily. If a student is struggling or if you just need support with something, please feel free to email the president, principal, or dean of students. **We are all here to support our SJA families in any way possible, so do not hesitate to reach out should the need arise.**

Once again, words cannot express the gratitude we have for all your prayers, support and patience over the past couple of weeks. These are challenging times for everyone- students, parents, teachers, staff, and administration, but we will get through this together. We are one SJA family, united in our faith and the desire to do what is best for our kids. We are #SJAStrong!

May God continue to bless your family and keep you safe,

SJA Administration