



VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL

SCHOLARSHIP. COMMUNITY. GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Dear Vermont Commons School Community,

I want to start by saying thank you for your communication over the last several days, and for your engagement, support, and compassion. These are incredibly challenging times for all of us, testing us all in ways most of us haven't been before.

Last night, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees and I, acting with the sanction of the full Board, we agreed that we needed to accelerate our mindful, preemptive action in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. Please know that we have no known cases of Covid-19 in our school community at this time. After a great deal of work, consideration, and strategizing, we arrived at the decision that **the school will transition to online, distance learning at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 17th**. Monday the 16th is a Faculty In-service day so that teachers and tech staff have the time for completing preparations for online instruction. Parent/Teacher conferences on Friday the 20th will go on as scheduled, but will be conducted entirely by phone call.

At this point, we anticipate we will certainly be online for a few weeks, and we will be regularly evaluating how long that needs to be and communicating with you. Every school day, teachers will teach and students will work, submit assignments, get feedback, receive grades, earn credit, all with the express plan that the school year will conclude on time on June 12th with the Graduation of the Class of 2020.

Our mission at Vermont Commons is Scholarship, Community, and Global Responsibility. We are first and foremost a school, and so our commitment to **Scholarship**—to the serious learning and growth of children—is our professional task right now. We are, however, deeply and profoundly committed to **Community**, and at times the need of the safety and well-being of our community necessarily inconveniences our customary way of approaching scholarship.

But we are also **Globally Responsible**. The choices we make do impact others, and the bold decisions we make as a small community can make a difference. That's what we've always believed as a school, and it's that very belief that drives this decision. If our decision can help others take similar steps, and if this overall contributes to the slowing of the spread of Covid-19 even slightly, which in turn can help to mitigate the burden on the healthcare system, it increases the odds that those who most need medical care will get it. We feel compelled ethically—and called by our mission—to act. We understand the great imposition this places on you and feel it ourselves and share it. Even if not in person, we will be with you throughout, working, collaborating, problem-solving, and maintaining the integrity of our school and the growth of our students.

My best to you and yours,

Dexter P. Mahaffey, Ph.D.
Head of School