



April 1, 2020

You may have heard that the U.S. Department Secretary Betsy DeVos recently canceled end-of-year testing obligations along with other measures intended to relax educational requirements for public schools. And, I am sure that there will be additional adjustments and accommodations extended to the millions of students and families due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. **We need to pray for our government officials as they navigate through these uncharted waters.** We also need to pray for children outside of our school who are not receiving the type of attention that our students at Hickory Grove are receiving. What our students have received is well above what other students have received during this time. These include but are not limited to:

- Increased daily communication to parent/families in the form of newsletters and opportunities e.g. fitness challenges, “spirit” week, and daily devotions from the pastoral staff
- Online face-to-face communication opportunities with parents and students
- Increased exposure to 21st-century technology tools
- Daily prayer presence for the entire family
- Personal tutors assigned to struggling students

These have been accomplished while still providing the same rigorous daily instruction that you expect from the face-to-face environment.

Beyond the basic desire to continue to provide a sound education, we are looking at other options and possibilities based upon recent legislation such as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) and Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). Both of these acts may provide some type of educational and financial relief over the next several

months, particularly this summer, and we are currently investigating these laws for applicability to our situation.

With stay-at-home and shelter-in-place orders, we intend to fulfill as many of the commitments as we can reasonably fulfill that were made to you at the beginning of the school year, namely **to provide a sound, high-quality Christian education**. You hired us to provide your child with a distinctive education, and we certainly intend to not only honor but to exceed this responsibility. One general example is that we chose not to close the school, but instead chose to continue to meet (and exceed) the educational goals that were established for your children so that they could be prepared to advance to the next grade. Based on your comments, we are delivering on that promise.

Our commitment has not been to work less, but current conditions have caused our school, teachers, and staff to work even harder to enhance instruction with new tools and delivery methods to meet those goals for your children. We would not have been able to do that had we not already delivered on small class sizes with an extremely competent and caring staff. **One of our distinctives as a private Christian School, and one of the very reasons we exist, is to pursue standards of excellence that are different than many of our counterparts**. Our teachers and staff have met and will continue to exceed that standard and commitment to our students.

Indeed the coronavirus pandemic has forced us to adapt how we deliver on our promises. We remain fully committed to your child's learning outcomes and finishing the year in the strongest manner. We will not retreat from achieving these spiritual and educational objectives. Understandably, we have adopted some creative strategies to provide instruction. We will continue to align our time and efforts to your child's mastery of this year's curriculum goals and objectives so they can advance to the next level with the prerequisite skills necessary to be prepared for that level. Measurements include the continued assessment of your child's learning level with the same mindset as if we were not experiencing this disruption. **We are considering adjustments for end of year testing**, but that has not changed our ability to diagnose and assess your children in their current readiness accurately.

As some of you know, we are proactive in cases of students who are not keeping up with the pace of instruction by assigning and providing tutors and increased online contact with teachers to ensure students are actively learning and meeting objectives. If assessments demonstrate that your child is not meeting the goals and objectives for their level, we will continue to look for ways to prepare your child in the hopes that they would begin next year at the proper place. Since enrolling in another school now is not an option that many of you can make, our convictions are to keep an eye on your child's upcoming school year in terms of readiness for the next grade levels' learning objectives. While monitoring those objectives, we will continue to teach as if we were in the face to face environment, and make sure that we are correctly applying strategies and preparing your child for next year. Your current family situation may not allow your child to work at a pace that will enable them to finish at the end of the school year. Therefore, **we are implementing summer learning plans that allow students additional opportunities to demonstrate their readiness for the next grade level**. We are blessed as a school and praise God that we have been able to provide reliable academic continuity for your family when many other schools could not provide that same level of education.

Although we do not have the means to refund tuition, since our entire staff continues working even more hours, we desire to work with you during these hard times. We will do all that we can to extend those dollars as far as necessary to reach the ultimate goal of readiness for next year. **We consider it our obligation to continue to deliver what we promised when you partnered with us to fulfill your child's educational needs.**

It is times like these that your partnership will be needed even more to educate your child properly. **You can help us by ensuring that your child is actively participating in class**, that they are "attending" class as assigned and consistent in turning in their assignments so that it will not be necessary to fill in gaps this summer. Our reputation lies in the success of all stakeholders, and you can be certain that we will only send your children on to their next level as fully prepared students for the challenges that lie ahead.

We are still working and are committed to assisting your family with individual issues as God lays them before us. The current situation provides all of us with an opportunity to demonstrate how well we accomplish our mission in this challenging time. **It is our continued prayer that God will continue to provide, and the result will bless you in the end.** Now is our time to shine together for the glory of Christ!

Jimmie Quesinberry, Jr., Ed.D.