

4.17.2020

Dear Charter Arts students and families,

We have been in Q4 remotely since April 6th, and we wanted to share some updates with you as we have clarified our grade reporting plans as we look to the end of this academic year. Additionally, we recently surveyed both students and teachers to learn more about their experiences with remote learning and will be making some strategic improvements to our process given their important feedback, some of which are addressed below and will be in effect starting Monday, April, 20, 2020. Please read this letter in its entirety.

To keep this as clear as possible, we have bulleted key information and updates below.

- PA school buildings will be closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year as per Governor Wolf.
- **Charter Arts plans to continue remote learning until May 29, 2020, which will be our last instructional day for the 2019-2020 school year.**
- Final exams in all courses have been waived.
- Since seniors will not be able to finalize their graduation projects or finish their required community service hours, current seniors in the 2020 graduating class will be exempted from these two requirements.
- Student attendance still needs to be completed, but we are extending the window during the day for students to complete the attendance survey from **7:30am - 11:59pm daily**. English teachers will be keeping this attendance form at the top of their Classwork tab for easy access. For questions regarding attendance or to submit written absence notes, please email [attendance@charterarts.org](mailto:attendance@charterarts.org).
- As a reminder, teachers, school counselors, and administrators plan to communicate with students directly via email. Therefore, it is a Charter Arts expectation that students check their email every day or at minimum every 48 hours.
- Our school counseling staff, just like our teachers, are available during [office hours](#) and by appointment and email. Please feel free to reach out to them as needed. Visit the Counseling Suite and Student Support Google classroom for more information. If you have not yet joined, the classroom code is: **bcak66g**. All students are encouraged to join this Google Classroom to get important information and announcements from the Counseling Department.
- In addition, the **Safe2Say Something** state reporting system continues to be available. If you are concerned for a peer, you may submit a tip through the app, phone number, or website. Please see the Charter Arts website [for more information](#) and the counseling Google Classroom for other important safety hotline numbers available to you.
- We will be hosting several virtual family engagement events on Wednesdays for the next five weeks. Read more about each event in [this letter](#). Additionally, please fill out our annual [family survey](#) to share feedback.
- **The contents of students lockers have been emptied and boxed. We have scheduled pick-up sessions for the week of April 20th.** Locker pick-up will be scheduled by floor (families with students in multiple majors/locations may choose one pick up time):
  - Monday, April 20th - 9:00am-1:00pm: Lower Level

- Tuesday, April 21st - 9:00am-1:00pm: Second Floor
- Wednesday, April 22nd - 9:00am-1:00pm: Third Floor
- Thursday, April 23rd - 3:00-6:00pm: Evening Pick Up for those who couldn't make it Mon-Wed

## Grading Updates during School Closure

**Charter Arts expects that ALL students will continue to remain engaged in completing Q4 work as assigned and will continue to submit their daily attendance log.**

With regard to grading, ultimately, we believe that Q4 work and remote learning should not stand in a student's way to meet graduation requirements, move to the next grade level, or maintain their GPA prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning. Additionally, some students need opportunities in Q4 to pass for the year based on prior performance in Q1-3. To that end, teachers will continue to provide a hybrid of live sessions, new instructional videos, and asynchronous assignments (work at your own pace) during Q4, and students will continue to have access to teachers for support during their office hours and by appointment. However, Q4 assignments will not decrease a student's overall course grade for the year (see explanations below).

## End-of-year grades will be calculated in the following manner:

- Q4 assigned work (as originally outlined in our [3.26.2020 communication](#)) will be graded and added to the PowerSchool grade book. Teachers will enter grades based on completed work and will enter zeros for missing work. Late policies may apply for work submitted after established deadlines.
- **Student work submitted during Q4 remote learning will be applied to a student's course end-of-year average only if it benefits the student for their year end average.** This will be determined after Q4 grades are finalized and all work has been submitted and graded. To clarify:
  - If student work submitted during Q4 benefits the student and improves the student's average in the course, the work will be included in their overall grade calculation for the year (averaging Q1-4 together).
  - If the student's work during Q4 **decreases their course average** (for whatever reason), their Q4 work **will not be applied** to the overall calculation, and their final course grade will be based on their average from Q1-3 only.
  - **No students' final course grade will decrease as a result of Q4 remote learning.** By default, all students can earn no less than their Q1-3 average.
- For courses in which only enrichment was offered during Q4 (i.e. some Core and Out-of-major artistic electives listed below), students' final grades will be averaged based on Q1-3 only. The following electives will earn final grades based on a Q1-3 average:
  - **Core Electives:** Creative Writing, Journalism, Contemporary World Issues, Personal Finance, Astronomy
  - **Out-of-major Artistic Electives:** Advanced Photography, Audio/Video Production, Broadcast Production, Creative Process for the Dancer, Intro to Acting, Intro to Film Studies, Intro to Graphic Design, Intro to Photography, Intro to Vocal Techniques, Jazz Ensemble, Musical Theatre, Touring Choir, Treble Choir
- S2 classes (Algebra & Biology Keystone Workshop & SAT prep English & Math ) will be finalized as P/F based on work completed in Q3 and will not be calculated into the GPA.
- **Students who do not achieve a passing grade in a particular class (either because the earned Q4 grade did not bring their year average above the passing mark or because the class was averaged based on Q1-3) will need to complete credit recovery over the summer. More information will be provided about this process.**
- For detailed information about a student's artistic major, please see the message from the Artistic Director on the next page:

## A message from your Artistic Director ...

To the Families of Our Literary Arts Students,

I hope this letter finds you well and that you are all staying healthy. As you are all aware by now, remote instruction for the fourth marking period commenced on April 6th at Charter Arts. I wanted to reach out to you to further outline the remote learning philosophy of the Literary Arts Department and to articulate for you the specifics regarding the Literary Arts coursework for the remainder of the school year.

From the outset of this pandemic, the Literary Arts faculty wanted to find a way to bring some sense of educational normalcy to your students. Reducing the change variables as much as possible was our primary goal. I met with the rest of the Literary Arts faculty, and we developed a plan that I truly believe offers our best shot at stability for continuing with the Literary Arts curriculum considering the circumstances. We have attempted to maintain the school's day one through four cycle schedule so that students can plan on having coursework due for their courses on the days they would typically have those courses in person. All assignments that appear on Google Classroom will have specific due dates attached to them. Teachers may post material early in order to give students more time to complete the work. Teachers have posted office hours and are immediately available to students during that time so that they can offer clarification for students regarding coursework. Teachers are available via email outside of these office hours and will respond within 24 hours.

We have been running and will continue to run **ALL LITERARY ARTS COURSES** on your student's schedule in order to create as much instructional continuity as possible. The courses are being run normally with adjustments for online learning. This may mean new assignments or scaled back versions of typical assignments to account for the disruption caused by being thrust into an online learning environment. Students will receive a fourth quarter grade in each of their Literary Arts courses. This grade will be a reflection of the work completed throughout the duration of the quarter in each course just as it would be if school were in session in person. Grading policies for the fourth quarter will be in accordance with the school-wide policy that is outlined at the beginning of this letter.

The goal of the Literary Arts faculty is to make the end of this school year as worthwhile to your student as possible in the face of these unprecedented and uncertain times. While I am not so naive to think that things will be perfect, I can fully stand by our department's plan as one that was developed by thinking critically about what was best for our students at every step of the process. We have every intention of being patient and understanding of you and your student in a time that seems void of any real sense of routine. We ask for the same patience and understanding from all of you as we continue to educate your students to the best of our ability from our homes. Please know that I am available to speak with you should you need any clarification regarding our department's remote learning plan or if you have any other questions at all. I encourage you to reach out to your student's individual teachers if you have any questions or concerns regarding coursework in any of their specific courses.

We miss being with our students each day in class. We miss learning with them, and we miss watching them grow. Lastly, we miss engaging with the community we have created together. But this community is rooted in a deep care for one another, and it is a community that is incredibly strong. It is this strength of our Literary Arts community that will prove to help us survive this difficult time and will allow us to come back with more passion than ever. I believe this with all of my heart. Thank you for your continued support.

Paul Walsh  
Artistic Director of Literary Arts

Given these uncertain times, we know that students may need to make decisions based on what is best for themselves and their families, and as always, we want to ensure opportunities for success for all of our students based on their individual needs. To that end, some students may need to focus on certain classes more than others in order to achieve passing grades this quarter and for the year. Teachers, case managers, and school counselors will reach out to students and families if students are in danger of failing required courses based on Q1-3, as these students **MUST** successfully complete Q4 assignments in order to increase course averages to a passing grade. If extenuating circumstances present themselves, students and parents should reach out directly to their school counselor, case manager, or grade-level Assistant Principal for continued support.

Seniors, we are working on creative options to celebrate all of you and your hard work these past four years in lieu of a formal graduation ceremony since we will still be maintaining social distancing this summer! More information to come once logistics are finalized - hopefully next week!

Take care and stay healthy!

Admin Team

### *Creative Community Corner*

...to highlight upcoming opportunities, and to continue to keep the creative culture of Charter Arts alive & share our creativity while away from school. (See your grade level Google classroom for more information on opportunities)

**Songwriters Cafe** - 4.23.2020 7PM

**Virtual Talent Show** - Ongoing (submit to [mrosania@chartarterarts.org](mailto:mrosania@chartarterarts.org))

**Door & Window decorating** #inthistogether (Wk of Apr. 20)

**Virtual Spirit Week #2** (coming soon!)

**Crimes of the Heart** virtual performance (coming soon)

**Online Senior Visual Art Exhibit** (coming soon!)