

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.
- 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 they earned a Q4 grade that 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 below:

A message from your Artistic Director ...

In an effort to reduce the artistic work load, all Theatre students will be responsible for only 1 course in Theatre for Q4, offering enrichment in various elements of the Theatre curriculum* The grade they earn in this course will be applied to the other 2 Theatre courses on their schedules. For students who are able to fully participate and complete this work, this could raise their cumulative grades in all courses significantly. If the resulting grade a student earns in Q4 would be detrimental to their averages in their Theatre classes, they can, as stated earlier in this letter, elect to average only the grades from Q1, 2 & 3 for their final grade point average for this year.

Seniors will be working in Advanced Acting with Mrs. Wagner, while Playwriting and Senior Seminar are inactive for Q4.

Juniors will be working in Advanced Voice & Movement with Mrs. Weller, while Acting II & Directing are inactive for Q4.

Sophomores will be working in Theatre History II with Mr. Cantelmi, while Acting I & Modern & Contemporary American Lit. are inactive for Q4.

Freshmen will be working in Fundamentals of Acting with Mrs. Bickert, while Beginning Voice & Movement and Theatre History I are inactive for Q4.

*Please note that while these other courses are technically inactive (not receiving weekly graded work in Powerschool), we are working to create assignments in the main course to be reflective of the coursework they are missing, as well as providing optional enrichment activities in those courses.

Keep in mind that all of your Theatre teachers are just an email away. We encourage students and parents to reach out to us, at any point, to communicate their individual circumstances, so we can strategize to best meet the needs of all students in the department. On behalf of Mrs. Bickert, Mrs. Weller and Mr. Cantelmi, we send our love and well wishes to you all.

Mrs. Diane Wagner
Artistic Director of Theatre

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)

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!)