

2.17.2021

Dear Charter Arts Community,

It is hard to believe we are mid-February already, and as we think back on this year so far, we are amazed by the strength of our community and how far we have come since last March. Our teachers and students continue to engage in, learn from, and refine their remote learning experiences. The community continues to be creative together in remote artistic performances and exhibitions, and we want to thank you all for showing your ongoing support by attending our remote shows and family engagement nights. In this letter you will find updates on remote learning, Keystone testing, the school calendar, prom, graduation, and other upcoming events, along with a link to an important family survey below.

COVID and Remote Learning Update

Northampton and Lehigh County, the two counties which send the majority of students to Charter Arts, are ALMOST in a moderate level of community spread. As long as cases continue to decline, we can anticipate being in a moderate level of spread as soon as next week. We are eager to have students back in the building in some capacity as we look to finish out the school year and can't wait to see you all soon! More information to come.

Family Survey

This past week we surveyed our students and staff to gather their feedback on remote learning and the Charter Arts experience this year. Now we are asking for your feedback. **Please complete this [brief survey](#) about your family's experience with remote learning this year.** We kindly ask that you complete the survey by February 22nd and look forward to reading your feedback.

Semester 2 Grading Updates

When we communicated some grading updates last month, we indicated that a 45% placeholder for missing work would be an added buffer for students through the end of Q2 and would be re-evaluated for the 2nd semester. Based on grade data and anecdotal feedback, we will make the following modifications to this practice:

- Teachers will enter a 45% instead of a 0 for missing work **at the end of each marking period rather than throughout the marking period.**
- Additionally, the grade of 0 will remain for any assignments related to disciplinary matters including academic dishonesty, class cuts, or refusal to complete in-class work.

As we communicated earlier, our hope is for students to complete as many missing assignments as possible rather than rely on a buffer of a 45%. Our teachers continue to be as flexible as possible, and all revised late policies will continue through the end of the school year.

Keystone Exam Updates

Act 136 of 2020 has delayed the implementation of the use of Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement until the class of 2023 (current 10th graders). Additionally, all students who were not able to complete Keystone Exams in 19-20 will receive a non-numerical score of Proficient on each test if they passed the course associated with the exam (Algebra 1, Biology, Principles of Literary Analysis) during the 19-20 school year. The 10th grade students in this cohort may still benefit from the option to take Keystone Exams this year to achieve a numerical score for use in the [Composite Pathway](#) (one of 3 options to meet the Keystone graduation requirement). If you would like to discuss this option to further understand the benefits of testing this year, please contact Ann Marie Squerrini, Director of Admissions & Assessments at asquerrini@charterarts.org, or your child's school counselor.

At this time, PDE still intends for all schools to participate in the Keystone Exams for the 20-21 school year. We currently anticipate using the second half of May (and possibly the early part of June) for in-person testing for all students currently enrolled in Algebra I, Biology, and Principals of Literature (English 10). Testing will also include retesters from the 18-19 school year (students who have not yet achieved proficiency). Additionally, all students from the 19-20 school year will have the opportunity to test if they would like to opt into testing (see above). More information will follow about specific testing schedules.

Finals & Calendar Updates

At the most recent Board meeting on February 11th, the Charter Arts School Board accepted an updated school calendar to repurpose final exam week as an extra week of regular instruction to account for instructional time lost due to snow cancellations this year. Therefore, **students will not take official final exams this year for their core classes during the week of June 7th. However, students may still be asked to complete end of year projects, assessments, and/or essays in both core and artistic classes as part of the regular fourth marking period.** The updated school calendar can be viewed [HERE](#). Please note that this final week of classes, from June 7-11, will run on a regular remote learning schedule (M/T/Th/F synchronously from 7:40 - 3pm, W asynchronously 7:40-1:40) whether or not we are in Plan A (remote learning) or Plan B (hybrid learning). The final day of classes will be Friday, June 11th.

Prom & Graduation

We are planning for our end of year celebrations, including Prom and Graduation, and are exploring all options for hosting these celebrations. We will share more information as it becomes available as we know these are important events for our students.

Upcoming Events

The Spring performance season has begun! Even in this remote world, our students and staff continue to collaborate and make art! We recently held a Community Staff Performance Night, hosted by the Student Council, which was a heartwarming event that featured the talents of a wide variety of our staff. We want to thank all of the students that attended and sent encouraging comments as we “performed” for you.

Tickets to events and information, and links to free events are available through our website or by [visiting our ShowTix4U Box Office!](#) Upcoming events include:

February:

On display now - Production Arts - Creativity Fair: Turning Over 2020

[The Faculty & Alumni Art Exhibition](#) - hosted by the Visual Arts Department

February 12, 20, & 27 - Black Student Union presents - "Black History- Then, Now, and Black Joy"

- This show supports the Black Student Union’s Little Free Library project

Feb 23rd - 7PM Family Engagement Night

- Red, Yellow, Green: Relationships Exist on a Spectrum ([Register here!](#))
- Presented by: Crime Victims Council

Feb 25th - 7PM - Vocalist Cafe

Released this month! Episode 3 of The Mirror Warriors of Harmony Hills Children's Show

March:

March 12 - 6PM - Literary Arts Department - “Lodge” Reading

March 18 - 6PM - Literary Arts Department - Sophomore Showcase

March 19 - 7PM - Vocalist Cafe

March 26, 27, 28 - 2PM & 7PM - Dance Department - Young Choreographers in Concert

Final episode of the Theatre Department’s - Mirror Warriors of Harmony Hills Children's Show

The Administrative Team