



March 25, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope this email finds you well. I have been thinking of you much over these past twelve days as I've worked with middle school teachers to plan a smooth transition into e-learning next week. I hope you have had sweet and memorable moments amidst the unsettling times. I have started writing in a gratitude journal again, and I realize there are so many things to be thankful for daily! A shift of focus does wonders for my mental health. I am grateful for our beloved Monument Academy community.

I wanted to communicate with families as soon as we solidified a plan. Our plans from twelve days ago have shifted, as daily we are receiving new information to assimilate and use in decision making. I have been communicating with teachers across the world to understand the challenges of distance learning in these times. There are many of them! I am confident that we can navigate it together and come out stronger on the other side.

As a middle school team, we are doing our best to simplify the process for you. We are all learning, and I know we will make missteps. Please be willing to share your experiences with us graciously. We genuinely want to provide continuity for our students while not overwhelming. Our hearts are for our students and families, and this separation is hard on us, as well. We all look forward to a day when we can come together again in physical space!

I'm communicating our centralized plan for middle school so that you do not have to navigate seven different emails from seven different teachers. Rest assured, they are longing for connection with their students and families!

Here are the basics in bulleted fashion:

- Middle School students will be navigating their courses through Canvas like they are used to doing. For clarity and ease of use, all teachers will have the same table on the home page of each Canvas course. Don't worry if you don't know what this is! Your student can take you to the home page of each course easily. The table will give you the teacher's office hours, along with information about the best ways to contact them. Because teachers may also be experiencing new challenges at home, we wish to offer clear communication for how to connect. Your student can continue using the Canvas messaging option to contact their teacher directly through Canvas. You will find a weekly To-Do list for the class in this table, as well.
- Teachers will be posting two new lessons a week (think block system, like current area high schools). They will post the first lesson by Monday at 10:00 am and the second lesson by Wednesday at 10:00 am. As a time-management guide, we are suggesting that students complete their periods 1-4 assignments on Monday and Wednesdays and their periods 5-7 assignments on Tuesday and Thursdays. There will be leeway with this system. For example, an English assignment posted on Monday will not be due until Tuesday at midnight for all students, regardless of when they have English. A new

English assignment will be posted Wednesday morning by 10:00, and that assignment won't officially be due until Thursday evening at midnight. Our idea is to provide options during times when families need to share devices or have other needs, such as childcare, etc.

- There will be a new Social/Emotional Canvas page that your student can visit as an optional resource. It will have resource information for families, as well as optional content for your students to view. For example, resources will be available for students to explore *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. Social/Emotional learning is essential for all ages and is especially valuable in times of crisis. These resources are available, but not required as assignments.
- Teams will take attendance through an online attendance "quiz". When students complete the "quiz" twice a week, they will be marked present that week. Attendance quiz will be included in the History course and listed as one of their To-Do's on the History Canvas Home Page.
- Fridays are Professional Development days for our teachers. They may also be checking in with you to find out how your families are doing and to discuss attendance and assignments.

I think that does it for now! We are traveling this road together. We will continue to adjust as needed.

Thank you for partnering with us. You are in our hearts and minds.

Warm Regards,

Julie Seymour and the Middle School Faculty