



## Weekly Note from PS Administration May 18-22, 2020

### Dear Primary School Parents!

I have to be honest and tell you that this has been a rough week. Being alone, worried about my family in the US, thinking about our students and your families, and concerned about our staff just took its mental toll on me. I also realize this quarantine has been hard for all of us, and that is where my reflection took me this week.

As adults, we are sometimes so wrapped up in our own problems and in our own bubble that we forget others are living through this pandemic as well. Our international teachers are here without their families, and are worried about what is happening at home. Colombian staff are separated from their extended families, but still feel anxious just being kilometers away from them. We are all missing the day to day interactions we have with your children and each other.

I am asking that you remember this when you are reaching out. We are ALL hurting, concerned, anxious, and scared about this situation, without any knowledge of when and how this will end. Everyone is supporting not only your children, but many staff are also supporting their own children, while taking care of their own households. We need to approach each other with empathy and caring. These past few weeks, we have had the same message to you: the social and emotional needs of your child are more important right now. After this week, what has become clear in this time of the pandemic is I am more concerned about our students' social and emotional well-being, and less concerned about their academics.

Every single one of us are in a traumatic situation. Even in the most supportive and loving homes, this situation is creating trauma. Primary students who don't have the language, or mental maturity to process what is happening and why it's happening are being hit the hardest. They don't have the language or experience to understand the emotional, intellectual, physical, and social transitions they are being forced to undergo.

What they require now more than anything is psychological and emotional safety. When we are afraid, anxious, or overly emotional the frontal lobe of our brain does not process new information. Our neurological responses are focused on preservation, not learning and acquiring new skills. So, adding more academic work, pushing them harder and harder to complete assignments, in the end, will backfire.

Our jobs are to help our students gain a love of learning, a desire to question, explore and understand problems and figure out the puzzles, and to have fun. They will learn to read, write, understand the patterns in numbers, and develop those complex thinking skills right now through play and spending time with you. We have the capacity and the time for more traditional academics when this is over.

This situation is not going to get better if we keep pushing academics without supporting their mental health and emotional needs. In fact, they will grow to hate school and learning even more during this time, if we don't adjust our thinking. In this environment, our children will get the underlying basic skills they need to be successful through play, conversation, dancing, making art, inventing games, learning new songs, reading and being read to for fun, cooking, and even through boredom. The list of ways to build pre-academic and academic skills is endless, and it does not require screen time, or completion of online academics.

We have asked our primary school children to adapt to a completely new lifestyle that requires a complete 180-degree shift in everything they have come to understand and expect in their short lives here on Earth. If you don't think they are learning, you only have to look at where they have come since the beginning of this quarantine, and think about if you could have adapted so quickly to this situation when you were their age. I am imploring you, before pushing hard on their academic needs, to consider their mental health needs first. I leave you with a question that I would like you to ponder in this time of significant opportunity for change and growth. What do you want your child to have learned when this is over?

With Warmest Regards,

Donald and Paula

## Hot Topics

### Assessment Protocol

Beginning next week teachers will be starting to assess students in reading, writing and Math. These will happen during second synchronous time and Seesaw activities. These assessments are for teachers to know where students are at and therefore plan instruction accordingly for next year. We kindly ask you to please follow the attached assessment protocol to make sure that we are able to see where your child needs support or challenge next year. As always we remind our students about our four core values of responsibility, respect, integrity and caring. Thank you for your support.

Before Assessment	During Assessment	After Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding a space that is appropriate for assessment. A quiet place with no distractions (no toys, no food or other objects which can create distractions) Appropriate seating with a desk and a chair</li> <li>Parents may only help clarify instructions to students</li> <li>Parents may ask students to state directions in their own words in order to check for understanding</li> <li>Parents may only translate instructions if needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students must work <b>independently</b></li> <li>If students ask for clarifying questions you may               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-read instructions</li> <li>Listen to the instructions again</li> <li>Paraphrase instructions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents may help students turn in assignments on Seesaw</li> <li>Picture uploaded on seesaw must be large enough and with good quality for teachers to be able to read it.</li> </ul>

## **Parent University**

Part of our Coffee with the Principal will be dedicated to giving you strategies for helping you with distance learning. This week, Austin Levinson, will be talking to you about supporting parents with STEM activities at home.

## **Report Cards**

As usual, report cards will be in skyward on June 11th. During the third trimester we don't have Parent-Teacher Conferences. If you have any questions about your child please contact their teacher during office hours.

## **The Reading Process**

Vanessa Gilchrist, our Literacy Coach, did a wonderful presentation during Coffee with the Principal about the Reading Process and how parents can support at home. In case you missed it please click on the link below.

[The Reading Process](#)



[Children's grief in coronavirus quarantine may look like anger. Here's how parents can respond](#)



### Coffee with the Principal

Due to the change in Synchronous times we had to change our Coffee with the Principal for 2:00pm. We will see you Next Friday, May 22nd at 2:00pm.

Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/94804750571?pwd=aDhpMTVyUmlLbG9xbEpoNWpBQWZzdz09>

Meeting ID: 948 0475 0571

Password: 049233

### Read Alouds

Don't forget to visit Mr. B's Youtube Channel where he is doing daily Read Alouds. Your children will enjoy them as well as you:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyKZHN4U2C6fl8YMdDngbuA>

Visit Mari Ro's Youtube Channel to access other fun read alouds



- **May 22nd- Coffee with the Principal 2:00pm**  
**Zoom link:**  
<https://zoom.us/j/94804750571?pwd=aDhpMTVyUmlLbG9xbEpoNWpBQWZzdz09>  
Meeting ID: 948 0475 0571  
Password: 049233
- **June 08th - End of the year Assembly for K4-K5- First Grade 2:00pm**  
[Join Zoom Meeting](#)  
ID: 93963104490  
Password: kiSLLI9D03
- **June 10th- Second Grade Moving Up Ceremony 2:00pm**  
**Zoom Link**  
<https://zoom.us/j/94620387279?pwd=bnYvT2sybEE4S3lWQWk0MTFBSmINZz09>  
Meeting ID: 946 2038 7279  
Password: 044743



\*Most websites are adjustable for any grade level by selecting the appropriate level for your child.

**Reading websites:**

<https://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/>  
<https://www.spellingcity.com/>  
<https://www.starfall.com/h/>  
<https://quizlet.com/>  
<https://freerice.com/categories/english-vocabulary>  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/>

**Math websites:**

<https://www.ixl.com/>  
<https://pages.sumdog.com/>  
<https://www.youcubed.org/>

**Reading & Math websites:**

<http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/>  
<https://skoolbo.com/>  
<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>  
<https://mrnussbaum.com/>  
<https://mosamack.com/>  
<https://www.softschools.com/>  
<https://www.abcya.com/>  
<https://pbskids.org/>  
<https://www.funbrain.com/>