



Dear Northwest Academy Students and Parents,

For the first several weeks of the coronavirus shutdown, I think I believed I was acting out the dress rehearsal for a future and nightmarish *danse macabre*; everything seemed strange, nothing seemed real, and I trusted that I might one day discover the deep meaning underlying all that I was doing differently or anew.

And then, last week, my wife Lauren and I learned that a dear friend of ours had succumbed to COVID-related symptoms. The world stopped spinning on its axis. We cried. The horror *was* real. And the dress rehearsal was now over for us. Our grief merged with that felt by the survivors of the quarter-million victims of the virus and was echoed by the suffering of the tens of millions of people now out of work.

When we departed for spring vacation and I first announced that we would return from break to remote learning, perhaps the most compelling case had been put to me by several of our students, who were worried that they might inadvertently become the vector by which their family elders contracted the virus. They could not bear this thought and they were genuinely anxious and fearful.

The conversion to a stay-at-home world and our school's introduction of remote and continuous learning have often proven sufficiently demanding and distracting; it is all too easy to ignore the fact that our children are now living in an environment that is so emotionally charged that all of their decisions and actions and non-actions and reactions are haunted by the ever present potential for sad, heavy news.

As we journey together toward the end of this school year and toward summer, we shall endeavor to do all we can to support the emotional and psychic and spiritual health of our students, as well as their intellectual and artistic growth. And when your student has needs that we do not appear to recognize, or that you suspect we may have no reason to infer, please do reach out and let us know how to help.

We have now made the structural changes to our distance learning program that will carry us till the end of the term, and we are deep into planning for Commencement, Finals Week, Arts Week, and more.

We will conduct no more surveys covering this spring's activities (and our friends at SurveyMonkey will no doubt miss their Thursday evening sessions with the AngryPigeon). But you do not need to fill out a survey to provide us feedback—please continue to reach out—to me, to Dan or Rachael, to Caitlin, to advisors and Learning Lab teachers—to tell us what we

need to know. If your student needs more (of anything), talk to us. If your student needs less, talk to us.

As we move deeper into May, and have (perhaps) some sense of what September may hold for us, we will likely reach out for your feedback one more time. We intend to keep on learning through the balance of the spring so that we can continue to narrow the gap between what we are able to do online and the fullness of the Northwest Academy experience (for students, for teachers and staff, and for parents) that we've all come to prize.

I hope you and your family have a rewarding and fulfilling All School Service Day.

Stay well and stay safe,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris".

Chris Schuck
Head of School