



12th Grade Roundtable April 2, 2020

Brooke's opening remarks: Thanks for showing up. It's so great to see your faces and to know we are all gathered in community, despite the physical distance. It matters always, but matters so much especially now. There have been many curve balls, question marks and unknowns for the LAB Team to make our programming as responsive and care-taking as possible. My heart breaks for the seniors. It's such a disappointing way to end the arc of their LAB experience. I want to talk about all the rituals & celebrations that they have been looking forward to for years.

SPRING BREAK?

BROOKE'S REMARKS:

- Spring Break is rescinded: (New York) State has required remote learning throughout spring break
- Spring Break should be a restorative enterprise. So, it's going to be a time to catchup on work they have not been able to do on this first pass of remote learning. No new work will be assigned and nothing else will be going into JupiterGrades.
- In addition to that, we are going to run a little spring break camp – allowing students to pick their activities, which often will be teachers' passion projects – workshops or seminars. They will get a survey that they indicate what they pick. They will be told to pick five of things. It's all going towards **enrichment** and student **choice**. Make sure that students are coming together.
 - o One idea is a bedtime story with Brooke
 - o Another idea is academic extension for some of the classes they are already in
- Four buckets of things
 - o Tutorials for kids to get extra attention on executive functioning of remote learning – clinics – opt in
 - o Passion projects of the teachers
 - o Curricular extensions – enrichments
 - o Collection of links of outside organizations – interesting things for kids to do
 - o Physical activity piece – distance workouts – links for indoor physical activities

REMOTE LEARNING 2.0?

- When we first put this together (i.e., the first execution of remote learning), it was a stop gap measure. But now, we are thinking it will be for the rest of the year.
- We are planning an April 20th – June 20th program
 - o We are looking at weekly intervals for classes, rather than daily assignments.
 - o Each week iterating on JupiterGrades with more holistic denotations of each child's ability to show up and demonstrate understanding of material for the week. Simplifying and making it sustainable.
 - o Family Circle – mandatory 10:00am check-in – requiring every child show up and show their face, be counted, check-in
 - Every child is assigned to a staff member
 - Like a high school homeroom – announcements, new variables, questions about their remote learning, any guidance needs can be referred.
 - Each circle can come up with their own rituals – there are many possibilities (e.g., calisthenics, breathing exercises, etc.)
 - Mandatory check-in – at a reasonable time for everyone to show up and be on – starting April 20th
- This will be the version of remote learning that is sustainable for teachers and students for the long term

STUDENTS ARE HAVING STRUGGLES WITH MOTIVATING. ANY TIPS?

- Seniors have worked so hard and done so well academically. I would love the seniors to use those muscle as they transition to college. But I am most concerned about the affective well-being: depression, anxiety, apathy, disconnectedness
- This mandatory Family Circle as a LAB-required activity, will give them reason to wake up and show up
- We will be very intentional, especially with the seniors, about the composition of the Circle and the faculty mentor. Ideally, it's someone they really want to show up for.

- I have heard from families that these things need to be cast as mandatory. Otherwise kids won't do them.
- April 20 – end of June – pare down and simplify the work. Cast the Zoom/video interfaces, as the times when actual instruction happens, as required. Showing up will be required. Hopefully that will help.
- If your family is experiencing a level of apathy that is “typical” teen “I don't feel like it” affect (given that nothing is typical about this time), we can work with that.
- But if it goes into “scary-land”, where you feel like your kid is non-responsive or going deep within themselves, please let Brooke, Brandon, or Jason Koch know. We can help intervene appropriately on more of a counseling level.
- From mommy-Brooke, what helps so much is to get physical activity – agreeing to do the 7-minute work out as a family – gets the blood moving. Lack of activity, sedentary mode, and excessive screen time has been a real disadvantage to the kids' overall affect and capacity.
- Anything you can find that your kids won't reject. Simple. Anything to get them moving.
- “Move a muscle, change a thought” – helps kids get out of the rut.

HOW WILL THE MASTER SCHEDULES CHANGE IN THE NEW REMOTE LEARNING 2.0?

- They will not change much since it took so much effort to put that together.
- Many of the teachers have young or school-aged children at home. It's a real puzzle to put it together.
- We will have a much more structured weekly expectations for the students
- For IEP students, we will also have a pacing tracker. So, they can break down their week into days. Some of the students will need that.
- For others, it's a good pre-college exercise. Get your assignments on a weekly interval.
- Trusting that JupiterGrades will be updated on a weekly basis.
- **Checks for Understanding:**
 - o Another thing she's been hearing from parents: kids are doing the work but they don't know if they are understanding the material.
 - o Teachers are going to create these cycles where 1) material is introduced. 2) Material is taught (at the required Zoom session or something akin to that Kahn Academy or other video instructional tool)
 - o 3) Then some sort of demonstration of student learning, **not** called a test or quiz, but what she is calling the “Check for Understanding” which will go into JupiterGrades

FOR SENIORS, TRANSCRIPTS?

- No one will ask for the transcripts until the end of the year. No one will rescind college offers because of this **aberrant** semester.
- So, do the best you can. Keep showing up.
- Obviously, if we need to, we will narrate or explain how the semester has been impossible for the kids, whether that's been because of mental health concerns or home responsibilities. This has been an unprecedented time. Colleges are respectful of that.
- Most important thing is that students are intact and ready for whatever they have planned for September.

HOW CAN GRADES CAN BE FAIRLY ASSESSED DURING THIS TIME?

- We had asked for pass/fail and the State has said no.
- The State is being very recalcitrant on a lot of points. They are cleaving to the notion that the Regents is still on – though she can't imagine them staying on.
- She suspects that keeping Regents on and the requirement of using numerical grades is based on a fear that teachers will stop doing their jobs. So disrespectful.
- Grades will remain numerical, except for physical education.
- We are trying to use a kind, more holistic model for grading. Unclear whether that fits into your personal definition of “fair” but it will allow us to present the kids in the best possible light on the transcripts.
- Pass/fail on a case-by-case basis? No, we are not allowed. We are allowed in special circumstances when there is medical documentation. But in general, students will be earning number grades.

- Something that teachers are looking into doing grades INCREMENTALLY
 - o You got a 65% (= you did your best, you earned enough credit pre-closure – we are just going to register that as a pass)
 - o An 85% = you did your work, you seem to get it
 - o 100% = you showed up for everything, you turned in everything. Wow!
 - o Just so we are not in the weeds of discriminating between an 85% or an 88%, 96% or 100%
- If students are showing up and demonstrating understanding face-to-face, if writing is too much right now
 - o Given the combined circumstances of Senioritis, plus trauma, plus not having the physical presence of their teachers, we are calling showing up with verbal understanding, creditable.
 - o If your student is having real trouble/struggling to just showing up, please encourage them to e-mail their teachers. Teachers can, on an individual basis, discuss how to produce credit-worthy work.
- We have eyes on seniors because we cannot have anyone not graduate because of these circumstances.
- **Can the state change their minds to allow overall school grades of Pass/Fail?**
 - o Yes, they can do whatever they want. Brooke hopes so. I am going to pushing on that issue, at least for electives. Teachers will work on ways to grading that best mirror a pass/fail model while still attributing numbers – a holistic approach

HOW WILL FINAL EXAMS BE HANDLED? We will not be doing final exams.

AP EXAMS?

- College Board has not cancelled nor postponed AP Exams
- Created new versions of each exams - 45 minutes and taken online. Students are welcome to pursue that.
- College Board website has given so many resources and prep classes online
- Additional preparations are popping up on Kahn Academy and YouTube
- Teachers are not going to prioritize preparations for AP Exams, as they think about their time.
- Students who are looking forward to demonstrating mastery nationally, non-LAB resources are available.
- There are also old-fashioned books, also available to take practice tests.
- Teachers are happy individually to meet-up to answer questions or go through practice problems.
- But we are not going to prioritize review sessions for AP Exams
- Kay Rothman:
 - o AP Exams will be short-answer, **not** multiple choice, on topics already covered in classes.
 - o Go on the AP site, the College Board is doing the review on their website
 - o The kids have probably already gotten e-mails about the reviews.
 - o Those reviews are probably going to be the best because they know what is on those tests. No one else really does.

HOW WILL DIPLOMAS BE HANDLED?

- There is a chance to have a traditional graduation ceremony. She does not have control over that. The school building could be closed until September.
- She's been writing to seniors: We will not forget you or your celebration. It's just a question of when & how.
- At the traditional graduation ceremony, the scroll that is handed out is a dummy.
- You will all get your diplomas eventually, at a later date
- Graduation requirements: Brandon is being very careful to make sure all seniors will meet them.

TOO MANY DAILY E-MAILS FOR STUDENTS – REMOTE LEARNING 2.0 WILL SIMPLIFY

- The main thrust of Remote Learning 2.0 is to simplify. Instead of what's been, it will be:
 - o Here's the Google Classroom
 - o Here's the week at a glance
 - o Students will reach out to teachers if they need a tracking plan or a pacing chart
 - o There will be one deliverable per week with a check for understanding
 - o One interface/contact with teacher

- **Main ideas:**
 - **Simplify, pace ourselves, and really recognize everything happening (with progressively more direct personal losses) that we have to case that emotional wellness is the main event.**
 - **The routine of schoolwork as ONE potential way of keeping kids anchored in normalcy. But very much NOT a source of stress or panic.**
 - **We cannot do harm by way of augmenting online learning.**
 - **Instead, we are trying to build community remotely, giving the kids some kind of routines and expectations because we see that as healthy and helpful.**
- And if there are teachers who need a friendly reminder from me to cool it, just let me (Brooke) know. I know about the Math department and we had a chit chat: slowing it down and keeping it simple. But if there are other individual teachers, please contact Brooke.
- Most of that comes from a place of care taking, wanting to keep in touch, and wanting to keep every kid on the train. But they might not be getting the student perspective which is that expectation times 7 (from every teacher).

Collaboration with other students?

- Some teachers are experimenting with different ways for students to work together, making meaning and learning the way we value at LAB school. We are getting smarter about how to do that (i.e., break out rooms in Zoom or Google Hangouts)
- We need to invoke the flexibility and pluralism principles. Some kids are ready, willing, and able to be on in the room. Other students, will use the time as an opportunity to chit chat, and that's great too. And others will not be able to meet in that moment.
- We are going play and try. And it's going to be messy and imperfect.
- What we are hearing from students and parents alike is that the students miss each other. They miss working and learning together.
- Even students, who are very social, even online, miss working their academic peers who are not in their immediate friend group.
- The Family Circle in conjunction with some of the clubs will be able to facilitate collaboration, along with the pockets of academic collaboration.
- Brooke misses them so much, even taking them out of the bathrooms ;)

Will there be an opportunity for students to connect with YOU?

- I would love that.
- Over Spring Break, it could be the bedtime story. I am happy to have other kinds opportunities.
- An idea, let them interview me: Brooke Jackson, this is your life.

Will there be additional roundtables since we may be not returning to school?

- Yes, after we experience Remote Learning 2.0 for a week or so
- Perhaps beginning of May we could schedule another set of roundtables

Can Zoom sessions be monitored for effectiveness of instruction?

- Zoom platform is good for presentation with students on mute. And then the teachers potentially call on students. Teachers are getting more facile with the waiting room function, raise your hand and call on you function. Some teachers are shifting to recording and posting videos, which can serve the instructional piece of teaching and learning.
- In terms of monitoring, it's teachers who are doing the monitoring.
- The Zoom platform does not meet all the requirements of the instructional model. So, we are getting clearer about what the mode to deliver a new assignment, what's the best mode to facilitating students' practicing and asking questions, and what does assessment look like?
- We are learning this as we go.



- I know that many teachers are students to small group Zoom sessions, especially students who have IEP's or those who find this very overwhelming
- If your child is struggling, please reach out to the particular teacher whether they can join the smaller tutorials, because that has been a lifeboat for some of the kids.

VIRTUAL GRADUATION?

- Michele Seiden is offering help coordinate by e-mail with other interested parents.
- Committees to recreate some of the elements of graduation
- Bring students in on that planning

RITES OF PASSAGE OF SENIORS? PROM, SENIOR DINNER, YEARBOOK?

- Ms. Riina is finishing the yearbook. The yearbooks look beautiful.
- I don't know about distribution. The school is closed. We cannot accept any deliveries.
- Do prom and senior dinner, as best we can. Parents and students can give a sense of bandwidth and desire to show up for these kinds of things.
- Maybe we could do prom over the summer
- Commitment Day – wear your shirt – can do virtually
- Perhaps we should prioritize graduation and prom because they are really the central rituals
- Yes, we can do something before or after Thanksgiving, if we cannot do in the spring or over the summer.

SENIOR DUES? IF EVENTS CAN'T HAPPEN, USE THAT MONEY IN OTHER WAYS?

- Three scenarios
 - o Get your money back
 - o Support the school-at-large, as a donation
 - o Support the senior events in the fall, rather than in the spring
- Right now, all money is frozen. We can't move any money in any way. We cannot spend any money. We cannot write checks. Nothing can be delivered. Everything stays where it is, until further notice.
- If you need those funds, please ask for a refund. But, we just can't get it you now.

FINANCES ABOUT COLLEGE, FROM KAY ROTHMAN

- Kids are making their decisions. Colleges are going to be like the Wild West - financial aid
- Colleges are losing money right now.
- If you have lost a job, please reach out to the college financial aid office and tell them where you are. Talk to them. See what they can do.
- They are all assuming that kids are coming the fall. The reality is that kids are changing their minds and their plans, perhaps taking gap years.
- College are not going to like deferments, because colleges need your kids to be there next year.
- Reach out to them. They are all working remotely like we are.
- Kay Rothman is available to setup a phone call by email. She prefers phone call conversations to discuss specific students' situations. Facetime is also possible.
- Matthew Mulhern – Parents' Association speaker, already had planned in March but could be available for a Zoom meeting in the future.
 - o Kay Rothman expressed some reservations about Matt Mulhern.
 - o For seniors, parents should call financial aid office of the colleges they were accepted to.

Brooke: The mandatory check-ins will be very good for seniors. Michele Seiden and senior committee (to-be-formed), to prioritize prom and graduation to be held virtually or over the summer.

Michele Seiden (michelemsnyc@gmail.com) is willing coordinate and always available for parents' questions, suggestions, and assistance. Please reach out to her for any reason.

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