



HEAD OF  
SCHOOL

Members of the Governor's Community,

This has not been the spring that any of us would have chosen. The COVID-19 public health crisis has wreaked havoc on our daily lives and forced us to forego so many of the things that we most cherish about spring time in Byfield. After weeks of monitoring recommendations from the CDC, WHO, and federal and state authorities, it seems clear that the “stay-at-home” orders that have been issued in most of the country will be in place for some time to come. After consulting with the Crisis Management Team and the Board of Trustees, we have come to the immensely sad conclusion that there is no safe and responsible way that we can ask students to return to campus for in-person instruction this semester.

I suspect that this news does not come as a complete surprise to many of you. Many boarding schools had already come to a similar conclusion. We chose to wait because as long as there was even a remote chance that we would be able to be together for some amount of time this spring, we wanted to hold on to that hope. At this point, however, it is time to focus on the next phase of our online learning experience, *Together Online*, and plan for the remainder of the academic year.

Here is how we see key elements of the spring unfolding:

- We will continue with online instruction for all students through Thursday, May 28, which would have been the last day of the final examination period had we been able to remain on campus. While Seniors would have graduated on Sunday, May 24, the extension of the AP examination period requires that we keep all students in session through at least Friday, May 22, and we believe, given the remarkable disruption of the spring, that as a school community we should end the school year together at the same time. This will also allow teachers to focus on having all students doing their culminating work for the semester together. The Academic Office will work with department chairs to develop a plan for end-of-semester assessments in the coming weeks. You will receive an email from Mrs. White later today describing the schedule for the remainder of the academic year.
- We will break our end-of-year celebrations into at least three different events.
  - Our Awards Convocation, at which we present departmental awards to Juniors, will be conducted virtually on Tuesday, May 26 at 7:00 p.m. (EDT). While this event is typically only attended by students, faculty, and staff, we will make it available to all families.

- Our Senior Awards Ceremony will similarly be conducted virtually on Friday, May 29 at 7:00 p.m. (EDT) and will be open to the entire Academy community.
- Commencement Weekend (other than the Senior Awards Ceremony) will be postponed to a future date and conducted on campus as it has been for hundreds of years. I cannot imagine our seniors departing Gova for the next chapter of their lives without celebrating them on campus, handing them their diplomas, and letting them join the generations of alumni before them who have jumped the Mansion House wall. It is too soon to say when it will be safe for us to bring our seniors and their families back to campus but we will certainly give everyone ample time to plan for this special occasion.
- Boarding students will hear shortly from the Dean's Office about the process by which students may move out of their dorm rooms. For those who live a distance from Byfield, their belongings may be packed, shipped, or stored for them.
- As I informed alumni in a video message last week, we have already decided to postpone Reunion Weekend.

I am sure this news will raise a number of questions for you and we have done our best to anticipate those in [this FAQ](#). We will also hold another webinar for students and parents on Tuesday, April 14 at 7:00 p.m. (EDT).

Navigating the uncertainty of the COVID-19 crisis has been disorienting in so many ways, but it is difficult to imagine anything more disruptive to our sense of community than the loss for our Seniors of their spring in Byfield. Celebrating these students who have given so much to our community over the course of their time at the Academy is one of the great highlights of the year, and my heart goes out to them. We will do the best we can to recognize them in ways that are meaningful and fulfilling for them this spring, and then look forward to the day when we can welcome them back to campus to celebrate their accomplishments and welcome them into the alumni community.

As painful as this news is for all of us, I am comforted by the knowledge that our Governor's family will emerge from this crisis stronger than ever before. The creativity and positive spirit with which everyone has embraced the challenge of online learning are a tribute to the character of our community and I am enormously proud of all of you—our faculty, staff, students, and their families.

My best,  
Dr. Quimby

Peter H. Quimby, Ph.D. '85, P'14  
Head of School

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