April 13, 2020

Dear Henry Ford Academy Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Students,

Governor Whitmer, by executive action on April 2, 2020, has closed all K-12 buildings for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

Every school district or public school academy is required to develop a plan to keep students learning until the end of the school year. Our school year ends on Wednesday, June 17, 2020. Seniors’ last day is on Friday, May 22, 2020. The Academy’s administrative team, working with the teaching staff, support staff, and school improvement team members has developed our plan. It will be presented to our Board of Directors on Thursday, April 16, 2020 at 9:00am for approval. You can view the Board meeting by going to our website at www.hfa-dearborn.org, after which it will be sent to WRESA for final approval.

We are pleased to report that our staff has been implementing most elements of the plan since we first closed school on March 13th; especially parts of the plan related to continuous learning. After approval by the Board of Directors later this week, the plan will be implemented in its entirety and will be posted on our website.

How students are graded during the school closure is in the plan. We realize this is important to students and parents. Students will receive one of two grades on their transcript for the courses they are taking now. They will either receive a “P” (Passed the class. Earned 0.5 credit) or an “I” (Incomplete. Did not pass the class. Earned zero credit. Not factored into student’s grade point average). Students who receive an “I” will be able to make up the work without penalty up through their date of graduation or at the time of withdrawal from HFA.

In order to receive a “P” in any class, students must complete at least 60% of the assignments according to the criteria set by the teacher.

So let’s talk about why it’s important that students continue to do ALL of the assignments and earn a “P” in the course.

1. At some point, life will return to “normal.” Students will have to earn 28 credits required to graduate on time. It will be much harder to work on these classes later when they are already enrolled in five other classes.
2. In high school, most courses are sequential. Each course builds off of the previous course. If students don’t complete the work for Algebra, it will be much more difficult for them to understand and be successful in Geometry.
3. Students need to stay in a learning mode. It is well documented that students lose knowledge over the summer break. Adding almost 3 ½ months of “no learning” will be detrimental and extremely hard to make up.

We have taken a survey of the number of students we’ve reached in some way since the March 13th closure. So far we have reached 92% of our students. That’s pretty awesome! We will continue to find ways to contact the remaining 8 percent of the student body. We will also continue to distribute chromebooks / laptops to students. If your student needs a chromebook, please email Mr. Flannery at mflannery@hfa-dearborn.org. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT STUDENTS CHECK THEIR SCHOOL EMAIL AND PARENTS CHECK THE SCHOOL WEBSITE PERIODICALLY. This along with text messages and automatic phone calls are the best ways for us to communicate with parents and students.

The HFA staff meets regularly via Google Hangouts. We discuss how best to stay in contact with students and create a sense of community for them. We know this is a difficult time. Students who need to talk to someone can contact their counselor, Ms. Gibbs (9th and 10th) sgbibs@hfa-dearborn.org or Mrs. Redwine-Fergerson (11th and 12th) credwine@hfa-dearborn.org Please let us know if someone in your family has been affected by the coronavirus. We want to be as supportive as possible during this unprecedented time in our country.

If your student is in need of food, please see the free Food Distribution sites listed on the Henry Ford Academy Website www.hfa-dearborn.org under the heading Feeding Students During School Closure as well as information about P-EBT Food Assistance.

There still are many questions for which we don’t have a definitive answer, including those related to the Senior experience. As things develop I promise to keep you informed. We miss our students so much. My thoughts and prayers are with every Navigator family. Stay home. Stay safe. Save lives.

Sincerely,

Cora Christmas
Principal