



March 25, 2020

Good afternoon, Finn Families-

I hope this email finds you well. We have received numerous emails, calls, and messages from families sharing their experiences with school closure thus far. We appreciate you providing us feedback and input, so that we can shape this time to be as positive and helpful as possible. We understand and appreciate that everyone is experiencing their own stressors during this unprecedented time; from parents transitioning to working from home and schooling their children, to essential service workers continuing to serve our community, to families with immune-compromised members in the home. We each bring our own unique experiences to this time, and as a school, we aim to support and not add additional pressure. If you are feeling overwhelmed with the schoolwork and/or online learning platforms and technology, please know you are not alone. We encourage you to reach out to your child's teacher, to members of leadership, to any of our staff to walk you through each step. During this time of uncertainty, give yourself grace; allow your children to play, read, and to just engage as a family, as so often in our busy lives, we do not find the opportunity to do so.

### **Academic Programming and Communication**

At this time, the schoolwork being provided is highly encouraged; it is an opportunity for scholars to stay sharp and be ready to dive back in to learning when they return. To this end, Finn Academy strives to stay connected to our scholars and families, and to provide a level of continuity of learning and services. At this time, scholars are not being graded on the learning and work during closure. Should this change in the future, we will inform families, but only after ensuring that there is, to the extent possible, equitable access to the learning. As a reminder, teachers are not diving into new instruction or content; they are reviewing past skills and concepts, and most importantly, staying connected. If you have specific questions regarding the academic program and Finn's learning continuity plan please contact Jeremy Wheeler at [Jeremywheeler@finnacademy.com](mailto:Jeremywheeler@finnacademy.com)

We have asked teachers to stay connected via email, phone, and online learning platforms with scholars and families, however, we understand that for some families, this won't be possible to engage in fully. You will notice that teachers have set up Google Classrooms and have specific codes to be able to access this platform. If you need the access code again, please do not hesitate to contact the teacher(s) directly, including special area, literacy, and special education teachers, as well our school social worker. Attached, please find the special area's newsletter; to keep you informed and the scholars engaged in specials.



### Access to Technology

We are working to set up a laptop loan program, to give access to families in need of technology. Teachers have been connecting with families to determine level of need and how we can best support. This tentative program will take time as we review our inventory and develop an infrastructure to carry this out; more information will be forthcoming.

We continue to be in direct communication with the New York State Education Department, our authorizer, SUNY CSI, the Department of Public Health, and various other agencies and organizations to ensure that we are staying up to date and well-informed regarding school closure and educational regulations and guidelines during this time. Many parents have inquired about a potential extension of closure, and at this time, we have not received any information indicating that the closure will extend beyond the original dates of March 17<sup>th</sup> through April 13<sup>th</sup>, with scholars returning April 14<sup>th</sup>. As a school, however, we are planning for this, in the event that it is required or necessary. Should the closure be extended, we will initiate a more formalized learning program with additional information to follow.

### Important Reminders

- Food: As a reminder, food pick-up is Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:00-11:00 am at the main William Street entrance. Please do not let transportation be a barrier to this support; please email [aimeeciarlo@finnacademy.com](mailto:aimeeciarlo@finnacademy.com) if you are in need of a food drop-off.
- Social-emotional support: Our school social worker, Amber Summers, has a Google Classroom set up and is engaging in calls and video conferencing with families and scholars throughout closure, so please engage in that resource and support, as well. If your child was engaged in school-based Family Services counseling, Diana Tillotson, should have reached out, or will be reaching out to schedule telephone sessions with your child. If you have not yet heard from her, please let us know and we will support in following up.
- Rtl and Special education supports: Should you have specific questions regarding your scholar's Rtl or special education services/goals, please reach out to their service provider, case manager, or Theresa Cain at [theresacain@finnacademy.com](mailto:theresacain@finnacademy.com).
- Childcare: If you are in need of childcare information, especially if you fall within the essential service worker category, please let us know and we can provide those resources again.
- NYS Assessments: As a reminder, all NYS assessments have been suspended for this school year.

We are committed to keeping our families updated and informed, and will continue to utilize our Finn Academy Facebook page, our Finn Academy website ([www.finnacademy.com](http://www.finnacademy.com)), Kaymbu, email, Zoom, Google Classroom, and other mediums to ensure you have what you need.

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As always, stay well, take care of one another, and remember that we are all in this together.

Best,

*Aimee Ciarlo*

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*Dean of Scholars*

