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Dear Stormonth families,

The 2020-2021 school year is going to be a unique year, so we have a unique plan. Our administrative team and teachers have worked hard this summer to ensure that your children are most importantly safe, and that they receive an excellent education. We are committed to your children's social-emotional development and their academic success.

This year we have to be flexible; we have to be prepared to switch at the drop of a hat into virtual learning, if that is what we need to do. We feel very confident in our plan; and in speaking with other school leaders in neighboring districts, I am confident that we have the best plan here at Stormonth and Bayside.

If your child needs to learn how to read, we are going to teach them how to read. If your child needs extension or intervention, they are going to receive it. If your child needs special education services, speech, OT/PT, they are going to receive them. We are committed to ensuring an education of excellence regardless of these unprecedented times.

So what have we put in place to ensure success? We've had to think outside of the box.

For example, we've asked our teachers to departmentalize. Each team of teachers will have specific content area specialists. Each teacher on a grade level team will specialize in one content area this year. Teachers will pre-record lessons on Fridays for the upcoming week in their content area. Why pre-record lessons? So that when we have your children in the classroom, only two days per week, we can focus on the true "heart of teaching," the small group, one-on-one attention for each child to ensure they are succeeding. We can tailor our instruction to meet their needs in the moment, instead of being concerned with delivering each individual mini-lesson. Students who are learning in person will first watch the pre-recorded mini-lesson, and then engage in independent tasks and work with the teacher in small groups or one-on-one.

Pre-recorded lessons will also allow us to shift seamlessly into virtual learning, should we need to. Pre-recorded lessons will also allow our virtual students who are learning from home access to the SAME high-quality material. We are going to be teaching on a rolling curriculum; meaning your child receives 4 new lessons a week in Math- two from school, and 2 from home. Learning does not stop when kids are at home. Virtual Only students are learning the same lessons on the same days, just like students are at school.

What will the days at home look like for students in grades 1-4 in the A/B cohorts? There will be select times when our at-home learners tune in to join the rest of their classmates "live." This will occur every morning for a Morning Meeting- a time for the teacher to check in with students and set the agenda and the tone for the day. Students at home will have their Weekly Learning Plan in front of them, with specific Learning Targets and a "to do list" of items to check off for the day. Days at home will be more asynchronous; meaning, students will first join the class for a live Morning Meeting, then move on to watch the pre-recorded mini- lesson for each content area, and then engage in work that will be checked/due the next day when they see their teacher in person. Feedback through Seesaw or Google Classroom will not be provided for at-home learners in the A/B cohorts. Teacher feedback will be provided during your child's days at school. The day at home will be flexible, with time for movement breaks/lunch/snacks. We do not believe it is developmentally appropriate to have young children in front of a screen for 6 or 8 hours a day.

What about our Virtual Only kids? We have at least one assigned Virtual Teacher at each grade level. Students will have both synchronous and asynchronous opportunities throughout the day, just like our at-school learners. They will tune in “live” for a Morning Meeting, then they will watch the same pre-recorded lessons as our students in school will be watching; and then engage in the same tasks from home. Each child will meet in small groups or one-on-one meetings twice per week for Reading, and twice per week for Math. Essentially, they will be meeting in a small group DAILY for tailored instruction to meet their needs. And for our Virtual Only students, we will be regularly sending home physical materials for them to use at home- leveled books, math manipulatives, handwriting workbooks, etc. We plan to have regular pick up of materials bi-weekly on Fridays, beginning on the first Friday of the school year, September 4.

Each team has developed specific learning expectations for students at each grade level on Fridays. Fridays will include “unstructured” learning opportunities, such as reading with a family member, practicing math on Dreambox, handwriting pages, and science/social studies inquiry projects.

We are cognizant of the fact that parents/guardians will need to be partners in their children’s education this year. Thus, we have planned daily check-off lists for families to use, so that parents/guardians know exactly what their child should learn and be able to do by the end of the day in each content area.

Students will receive weekly art, music, Spanish, PE and social-emotional lessons. Virtual Only students at home will have access to pre-recorded lessons by grade level of our fantastic specialist teachers. Our specialist teachers, much like our regular education teachers, will be teaching four full days a week in person; which allows for small class sizes, and then will be meeting on Friday mornings to co-plan and pre-record lessons for the following week for at-home learners.

How do we intend to teach our youngest learners how to read? Teaching students to read is our speciality, and we are going to do it virtually, if needed. For our in-person learners, we will be meeting in small groups or one-on-one to provide differentiated instruction through guided reading in K5 and 1st grade. For our Virtual Only learners, we have many ideas in place to ensure student success. We will plan to assess students during the first few weeks of school, just as we normally would. For Virtual Only families who are comfortable bringing their child to school, we can meet them outdoors, with masks, to give them a reading assessment. For others, we can assess online. Instruction will be tailored by your child’s reading level, and we will work to move them forward in decoding, fluency and comprehension.

We have developed the attached “[Academic Learning Expectations](#)” by grade level for the year; which include the number of instructional minutes in a day, and how we are addressing these minutes by subject area. This will be a shared document between teaching staff and parents/guardians, so that everyone knows very clearly what is expected at each grade level. The number of instructional minutes listed on this document are an end-of-year goal. We will build to these instructional minutes as we go through the year. This document demonstrates that there will be an equitable learning experience for all students, regardless if they are learning in-person or virtually.

Should we switch back to full time in-person instruction, your child’s teacher will remain the same. It is our intent to have students remain with their classroom teacher if required to isolate or quarantine; however, based on the length of this determination, the student may be moved to the designated Virtual Teacher.

Please note that we will not be jumping into content on the first day of school. The first two weeks of school will be called an “Orientation.” During this time, we will be focusing on training your children in how to use a mouse, how to use Google Classroom for the first time in 2nd grade, how to access the Weekly Learning Plan, how to submit assignments through Seesaw, etc. We will be spending time building strong relationships and

trust with our new students. This period of time, lasting the first two weeks will be critical for success the remainder of the year, so we believe it is important to take the time up front to get to know our students, build relationships and set them up for success. For students in the A/B cohorts, will begin “live streaming” of Morning Meetings as soon as possible during these first two weeks.

I am beyond confident in our team of educators here at Stormonth. We feel very confident that our plan is the “best of both worlds.” You would be hard-pressed to find a more caring, dedicated staff who truly have your children’s absolute best interest in mind. Many thanks to our teachers who have not really had a summer break- they too have been thinking, planning, teaming together to prepare for the upcoming year, and I am truly honored to be a part of this team.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at any time at (414)247-4100, or via email at lwitkov@foxbay.org. My door is always open.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Witkov". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Laura Witkov
Principal