



UNIVERSAL FAMILY OF SCHOOLS

Universal Alcorn • Universal Audenried • Universal Bluford
Universal Creighton • Universal Daroff • Universal Institute • Universal Vare

August 3, 2020

Dear Universal Families,

The news about the pandemic and its impact continues to change day-by-day. Based on feedback from staff, families, and recent news of a potential escalation in COVID-19 cases in Philadelphia, **Universal Schools will open in the fall with a 100% online academic program.** This decision was a difficult one for us to make. It was only reached after a thorough evaluation of every possibility for opening schools. In the end, ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff made online schooling the best option. We know this decision will cause significant challenges for many families to navigate, particularly making childcare arrangements.

As conditions continue to change, we may need to make adjustments in the future depending on the trajectory of the virus and health recommendations from state and local authorities. However, here is our current proposal for the fall:

- **High Quality and standards aligned online academics: We will provide a robust, engaging online program to all students.** The program will include both live teacher-led instruction and self-guided activities. Schools will also provide individual and small group supports – by phone and/or online. Universal Teachers will be working hard to provide additional activities that bring joy, build school community and create a sense of belonging for every student. Our goal is for your child and family to feel supported during this very challenging and unprecedented time. **The online program will continue through at least the end of the first report period in early November.** We will reassess conditions and health guidance at that time.
- **School Start Date:** All students will start 100% virtual learning on **September 1, 2020.**
- **Chromebook Distribution: Every Universal student is eligible to receive a Universal laptop as a loaner for the school year.** Chromebooks will be distributed by your child's school for new students who did not receive a Chromebook in March or April. Stay tuned for messages from your child's school about how to request a laptop and when to pick one up.
- **High Speed Internet Access Support Program:** Again, we do not want anything to prevent your child from attending school and learning. Therefore, Universal will be providing eligible families with financial support for internet service for the coming school year. **For eligible families, Universal will provide internet service at Universal's expense for the school year. The service offered is Comcast Internet Essentials.** This service is a low-cost home internet service that offers adequate internet speeds for schoolwork. If a family cannot connect to Comcast, we will provide a mobile hotspot by T-Mobile or another provider. Stay tuned for messages from your child's school about how to request Internet Services.
- **Family Orientation:** For up-to-date information on our reopening and Health & Safety plans, please visit your school's website for additional updates.

We all understand the critical role that schools play in the lives of our students and families. Therefore, all teachers will receive robust professional development to ensure they are prepared to deliver meaningful teaching and learning online, and staff will continue working to ensure the necessary supports and guidance are available to help families navigate and be successful, while attending school remotely.

The ongoing health crisis has been difficult for all of us. At the same time, it is giving us an opportunity to show our strength and resilience. We will make it work. Thank you for your grace and flexibility.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nixon

Superintendent/CEO