



DR. BRIAN N. GUENTHER
PRESIDENT

March 27, 2020

Dear SMA Students and Families,

As of today, we have completed our first week of distance learning. We appreciate the sacrifices you are making as parents to ensure continuity of learning for your children. Your diligence and creativity have been a joy to observe as we have received many photos and reports of distance learning. I hope and pray that the experience has been one that has opened new avenues for creativity, learning, and time as a family.

As you are likely aware, a *Stay at Home, Work Safe Order* was issued on Wednesday, March 25, by the Hays County judge. This order went into effect yesterday, Thursday, March 26, at 11 p.m. and is scheduled to end on April 10 at 4 a.m. As per this order, county residents must stay at home at their place of residence, leaving only to perform essential activities, essential business or essential government functions. Because of this order, the Academy campus is closed to visitors at this time and will extend our distance learning format through Monday, April 13th.

Our plan is to resume normal school operations here on campus after Easter, Tuesday, April 14. This allows us to observe our regularly scheduled Easter holiday. Boarding students would return to campus on Monday, April 13, in order to be ready for classes the next day.

Returning at this time will allow us to stay on schedule with graduation plans. We realize that circumstances in our county, state, or country could counteract this plan, and we will continue to closely monitor new developments related to the coronavirus pandemic. I have worked with the administrative team to develop alternate plans for graduation. Should a change to our plan become necessary, we will communicate that information to you as soon as possible. Above all, the health and safety of our students and staff will remain our highest priority as any future decisions are made.

As a Residential School Program (as categorized by the Texas Education Agency), SMA performs an essential function and thus will continue to carry on operations that are essential to the care, support, and ongoing education of our students, including those who reside on our campus. For the small population of boarding students presently on our campus, we are providing supervision, study time, access to distance learning, meals, health care, and fitness activity, in the safest manner possible.

Most of our students are currently at home, as you well know, and our faculty will continue to provide distance learning curriculum for them as effectively as possible. Our current Academic

Distance Learning Plan allows our students to stay on track toward on-time graduation. This will only be accomplished as students continue to keep up with their academic work and assignments.

Our students will learn. Our faculty will teach. Our seniors will graduate.

Several of you have called or emailed with questions about payments and credits for your student accounts during our time of distance learning. We are aware of the potential financial impacts to our SMA families. Therefore, we will remove all late fees applied to past due student accounts for the months of March through May. If you need additional assistance with your payment plan past May, please contact the Business Office.

Several of our Boarding and Day parents have asked about potential refunds for tuition while their student is performing distance learning away from the SMA campus. While we are uncertain how long the mandated distance learning will last, we will have the following options for any potential refund.

For Day students, we will calculate the number of days missed by the daily cost for meals. For Boarding students, we will calculate the Residence Life daily cost for boarding and meals. Once we have the number of days of distance learning, we will calculate the amount of the credit.

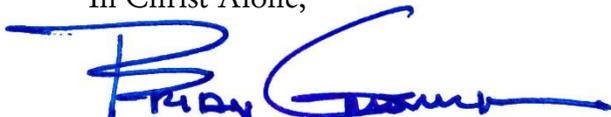
You can receive this refund in the following ways:

- **Credit on your current student account** - You may choose to receive the credit amount, minus any financial aid awarded during the time the students are not on campus, and it will be applied to the May 2020 Smart Tuition billing.
- **Credit toward your 2020-2021 student account** - If this option is chosen, you will receive the full credit on your July 2020 Smart Tuition invoice.
- **Graduating Senior** - You can request either the credit minus financial aid received, or have the full credit apply toward a sibling's 2020-2021 Smart Tuition account.
- **Donation** - If you choose not to accept the credit, you can request a tax deductible donation to the San Marcos Academy Student Financial Assistance Campaign. These funds will be used to help other SMA families who might need additional financial assistance for 2020-2021.

San Marcos Academy will quickly be completing her 112th year. Over the last century, this institution has weathered many world crisis events including wars, the Great Depression, stock market crashes, recessions, oil booms and busts, and other viruses to name a few. This is just another challenging situation that forces all of us to "think out of the box" and gives us the opportunity to be creative. Even more, we are blessed with the opportunity to exercise the gifts that God has given to us in new and challenging ways. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian people that we must all work together as one body (1 Corinthians 12: 12-27). We are blessed with the opportunity to do this every day, even if from a "social distance."

May God continue to bless us and San Marcos Academy as we seek to accomplish His work and carry out His mission.

In Christ Alone,



Brian N. Guenther, Ed. D.