

May 15, 2020

Dear Innovations Academy Students, Guardians, and School Districts,

I hope this communication finds you well. This communication aims at providing an update during this unprecedented time of Covid-19 pandemic with school information. I write to inform you about the following items:

- Continuation of Remote Learning
- Grades and expectations of remote Learning
- Extended School Year (ESY)/ summer school
- Survey and feedback form
- Graduation celebration via Zoom

As you are aware, Governor Pritzker announced on Friday, April 17, 2020 that onsite learning is suspended until the end of the school year and schools would remain closed. Recently, we received communication from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) that “schools and districts should plan to conduct summer school via remote learning in 2020, due to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency.” (<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Summer-School-2020-Guidance.pdf>) This means that we will continue to engage in our Innovations Academy Remote Learning Plan through the end of the school year and into our summer school session. We will continue to support the state’s efforts with daily student interaction and engagement, as well as continuing to improve our practices to develop more interactive two-way online learning experiences within our Remote Learning Plan.

“Governor JB Pritzker announced on May 5, 2020, the Restore Illinois plan detailing a public health approach to safely reopen our state. The Governor’s Restore Illinois plan places the return to physical school buildings in Phase 4 of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The entire state is currently experiencing Phase 2, but different regions around the state may reach Phase 4 at different times. [You may have heard already that schools and districts should have a plan A, plan B, and plan C. When students return to physical school buildings, in-person instruction will not look normal.] ISBE would like to make clear that while Phase 4 allows for the resumption of face-to face instruction, this is not the same as a return to pre-pandemic operations. Extensive social distancing measures, enhanced sanitation measures, and other accommodations will be necessary to ensure the safety of students, staff, and their families. [There will be more information forthcoming over the summer months with regard to the start of the 2020-2021 school year for August 2020.]” (<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Considerations-for-Closing-Out-2019-20-SY-51520.pdf>)

**End of school year, remote learning expectations and grades:**

Innovations Academy’s last day of school will be Friday, May 22, 2020. During this time students are expected to continue in their remote learning experience through Odysseyware (OW), our online platform, and using Zoom video conferencing with teachers and therapists as a

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means to support their learning. The expectation is for students to do the work as if they were at school following their regular scheduled school day. Remote work supports student grades and does not deplete their existing grades. Students not doing remote work at this time will carry an incomplete (“I”) for the quarter and semester grade. All students will be able to continue remote learning over the summer school session as their Extended School Year (ESY) to work on any incompletes, ESY courses, and continuation of their learning. “All students will have the opportunity to redo, make up, or try again to complete, show progress, or attempt to complete work assigned.” (<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/RL-Recommendations-3-27-20.pdf>)

### **ESY:**

We are looking forward to welcoming all Innovations Academy students to ESY this summer! “ISBE strongly encourages schools and districts to utilize summer school to address learning loss and academic gaps. Students who received Incomplete grades at the end of the 2019-20 school year or who were not able to engage fully in remote learning in the spring will benefit from increased access to instruction prior to the start of the 2020-21 school year. (<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Summer-School-2020-Guidance.pdf>)

All Innovations Academy students are expected to attend ESY via our Remote Learning Plan as it is part of Innovations Academy’s therapeutic programming and is included in each of the student’s IEPs. The Extended School Year (ESY) or our summer school will start on June 8, 2020 and will go through July 31, 2020. Although our traditional ESY schedule goes from 8:30 am - 12:00 pm, Innovations Academy staff will be available from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm Monday through Friday to support students over the summer. Innovations Academy staff will continue to use Odysseyware (OW) and Zoom as a means to comply with each students’ Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals. All teachers, therapists, the Occupational Therapist, the Speech and Language Pathologist, and other support staff will run identical sessions over the summer as we did during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter marking period this spring 2020 term. There will be more information to follow with progress on two-way learning improvements and ESY during the next few months. Please note that there will be no Zoom sessions or staff availability on Friday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> in observance of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Observance Day.

### **Graduation:**

Innovations Academy will be hosting a private graduation ceremony via Zoom video conference on Friday, May 15, 2020 for our six eight grade graduates and our five high school graduates. Immediately following the ceremony, Innovations Academy staff will do a drive by graduation parade as a farewell to our high school seniors as we will be seeing all of our 8th grade graduates back at Innovations Academy on June 8th via the Remote Learning Plan. Congratulations and let’s celebrate our graduating class of 2020!

### **Surveys:**

In an attempt to gather information on how well we have maneuvered this unprecedented time and moved from face to face instruction to this remote learning period, Innovations Academy is

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asking all parents, school district personnel, and students to complete a Google survey. These Google surveys will be emailed to families, and can be returned via email to our staff. We look forward to receiving all surveys prior to June 8, 2020. Blank forms will be available on our website at [www.innovationsacademy.net](http://www.innovationsacademy.net)

**School Hours and mental health crisis:**

Innovations Academy's school hours are from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm. If you are attempting to reach the staff after 4:30 pm, please know that all of your messages will remain in staff's inbox until the next business day. However, if you are experiencing a mental health crisis or emergency, please **call 911**. If you are in distress, experiencing suicidal thoughts, fear that you are at risk of harming yourself, and/or need to speak with someone immediately, please call **The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255**. *For the Spanish-language Lifeline, please call 1-888-628-9454.*

During this time of Remote Learning, we will continue to encourage students to participate and be accountable for their academic responsibilities. We will do so by continuing to award students daily points for attendance and work participation/completion. Teachers will keep track of these points and grades, and upon returning to our regularly scheduled school year, incentives will be awarded. Teachers and Case Managers will continue reaching out to students and parents/guardians to provide support during this time. Please feel free to contact me for any other questions at (630)540-3900 ext. 2774.

Thank you,



Dr. Ariel Correa