

Dear Pirates,

Welcome to the strangest and most unique start of a school year I've experienced in my 20 years of public school work! There is much to focus on if we turn our attention to what's lacking and should be different as we prepare for a year of learning. We should be gathering in person, running our normal schedule, and interacting together in our great school. Instead, we are keeping our community safe while doing our very best to maintain the amazing learning environment at VHS.

Our staff have been working for the last several weeks and months to make the unprecedented shift from in person learning to remote learning. Our focus in how to structure our schedule and supports centered on two things: Equity and Excellence. Our equity considerations were based on feedback and data collected on the experience and performance of our students who struggled last spring with distance learning. Our excellence focus centered on ensuring our students are prepared for their next steps - whether that's college, work, or simply the next course in sequence.

It is out of this work that our quarter model was developed. We want students to dive deeply into a few subjects, reduce the overwhelming amount of communication and logistics associated with 6 classes, and to still have space during the day for us to provide help and support to those who need it. This is why we are running 3 classes for 9 weeks (Q1) followed by 3 more classes for 9 weeks (Q2).

We see the challenges involved and believe our support structures and teacher preparations will mitigate the liabilities of having 9 weeks between subjects. For instance, Math, World Language, and AP courses will be uniquely supported in our model with extra contact between teachers and students. Several of these teachers have already planned out their courses to the point where they know which content they can cover and reteach within the quarter while providing off quarter practice and supports to ensure students maintain their learning. We will provide weekly opportunities, as indicated from teachers, for students in these critical subject areas (AP, Language, and Math) to meet with their off quarter teacher.

In addition to off quarter contact we are also offering all students the opportunity to earn Directed Study credits this year. Directed Study credits will be Pass/Fail credits, up to 1.0 available, for students to use as they complete off quarter work, creative endeavors, or tackle Incompletes from last year. Directed Study credits can be worked on during our designated SMART periods during the day (2 a day are scheduled) or at other times. More information will be provided about Directed Study credits soon. Finally, these credits are not required for graduation and are totally optional.

If you have questions or concerns about our quarter model, our supports, or anything else about our program design I encourage you to reach out directly to Mr. Guss or myself. We are here to support you and the success of our students at VHS!

OK, now it's time for some details!

VHS will host a Parent/Student Q & A session to address any questions you might have about the program and the start of school. Please attend on Monday, 8/24 from 6:30-7:30 at this ZOOM link:

<https://zoom.us/j/95275410327>

The following items are important logistics for you to be aware of and to participate in:

- **9th Grade and New Student Orientation:** We will be running a special orientation exercise for incoming 9th graders on **9/1 from 1-2:45pm**. Students will be in small virtual groups with VHS Student Mentors who will share lots of valuable information on how to have a successful start at VHS. They will also be available year long to our 9th graders as a resource for support and guidance.
- **Student Schedules and Change Request:** Student schedules are now visible in Skyward. To make a schedule change please contact your school counselor: Mr. Peretti A-K, Ms. Vanselow L-Z
 - Counselors will begin taking schedule change requests on Monday, Aug. 24th. Due to the current circumstances, schedule changes will be kept to a minimum and priority will be given to students missing classes or with "See Counselor" messages.
 - The process for changes will be via a Google Form that you will receive a link to on Monday. *Please use the google form and do not email your counselors with schedule change requests.* The form will help us track which requests we've processed.
- **Office Opens:**

As VISD staff are working both from home and from the building, the VHS office is open by appointment M-F generally from 8am-3pm. To make an appointment to visit the office, please email jmerrill@vashonsd.org or debfranson@vashonsd.org. If you arrive without an appointment please call 206-463-9171 and we will assist you if at all possible.
- **Face coverings and PPE.** All employees, students, and building visitors shall wear a cloth face covering (over nose and mouth) or protective face shield while at the worksite, except:
 - those with a disability that would prevent them from comfortably wearing or removing a face covering
 - those with respiratory conditions that would prevent wearing face covering, or trouble breathing
 - those who are deaf or hard of hearing and use facial and mouth movements as part of communication
 - those advised by a medical, legal, or behavioral health professional that wearing a face covering may pose a risk to that person
- **Student Materials Drive-Thru Pick-Up Day - Monday, August 31.**
 - 9th grade Freshman pick up plan: 8/31/20 from 9:00-12:00 at the Tennis Courts
 - 10th grade Sophomore pick up plan: 8/31/20 from 9:00-12:00 at the Flagpole
 - 11th grade Junior pick up plan: 8/31/20 from 9:00-12:00 at the Lower Parking Lot
 - 12th grade Senior pick up plan: 8/31/20 from 9:00-12:00 at the Lower Parking Lot
 - West Seattle pick up plan: 8/31/20 from 9:00-12:00 at TBD: [Fill out this form!](#)
 - Southworth pick up plan: 8/31/20 from 9:00-12:00 at TBD: [Fill out this form!](#)

If you are unable to pick up on 8/31, please email Jackie Merrill to schedule a pickup date/time. If you are unable to come to the island or make alternate arrangements, please contact Jackie Merrill at jmerrill@vashonsd.org.

In addition to distributing Chromebooks and class text supplies on 8/31 we will also be holding class meetings virtually to orient all students to how this year's learning will work. The schedule is as follows:

8/31: No Classes will meet but materials and orientation will be shared

Chromebook and Material Distribution: 9am-12pm

Southworth and West Seattle Commuters will have drop offs local to them.

12th Grade Class Meeting: 1-2:30pm (Link to follow later)

9th-11th Graders will have online tasks to complete 1-2:30.

9/1: No Classes will meet but orientation and onboarding will occur. LINKS to Follow for Meets

9th Grade Class Meeting 9-10:20am

11th Grade Class Meeting 11-12:20pm

9th Grade Orientation 1-2:45pm

10th Grade Class Meeting 1-2:20pm

Regular Schedule beginning Wednesday, 9/2:

Regular Schedule		Early Release Day	
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday		Friday	
7:30 - 8:55	Teacher Planning and Instructional Support	7:30 - 8:20	Teacher Planning and Instructional Support
9:00 - 10:20	Period 1	8:20 - 8:50	Office Hours
10:25 - 10:55	Flex Time (SMART)	9:00 - 9:50	Period 1
11:00 - 12:20	Period 3	10:00 - 10:50	Period 3
12:20 - 12:55	Lunch	11:00 - 11:50	Period 5
1:00 - 2:20	Period 5	11:50 - 12:20	Lunch
2:20 - 2:30	Break		Team Planning, Staff Meetings, Lesson Development, Professional Development - Student
		12:20 - 3:00	

Independent Work

- **VHS Sports**

- Information about Sports for the 20-21 school year: At this time, VHS sports season dates and games schedules have not been finalized. We are committed to creating opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities as it becomes safe to do so. VHS Athletic Director, Andy Sears (asears@vashonsd.org), will be sending our more information to students and families as it becomes available.

- The VHS ASB leadership will be working within pandemic guidelines to provide engaging and fun activities for our students. The purchase of an ASB card is encouraged, and can be done online for \$50.

- **Class Fees: All class fees are being temporarily waived.**

- **VHS CTE CLASSES DURING DISTANCE LEARNING: *IMPORTANT*** Next week a separate email will be sent to students and their families. It will be CTE specific and will require your approval for your student to receive CTE supplies to work with at home.

- At home project options will be provided to all CTE students at no cost.
- Project materials and tools will be provided in the materials bag during Q1 and Q2 pick-up days.
 - Additional pick-up days are likely. Along with a permanent material pick-up spot.
- Flexible schedule options are being developed to allow for several “in-person” instructional options. All of the following are being considered and health/safety/logistical plans are being developed:
 - Outdoor access to materials and tools under teacher supervision
 - Small group (1-4 students) access to CTE classrooms (all have separate entrances directly to the class).
 - Small group gatherings (1-4 students) at varied spots on island and off island. Teachers would arrive with materials and supplies to provide instruction and supervise use of tools.
 - The in-person options being developed are optional. A student's grade will not be impacted by requesting at home only project options.
- Projects are encouraged. If you and your student have a creative idea, work with your teacher to see how that fits in the CTE class.

OK - still reading? You're awesome. While this year will certainly test our ability to be creative, persistent, and adaptable there is one thing for sure I can count on: The excellence of our students and staff. We have the best students anywhere! They are kind, hard working, funny, creative, talented, and generous. We also have amazing teachers and staff who are truly dedicated to the success of their students. Our staff put in tireless

efforts to help students get across the finish line and they are prepared to do again this year. I have worked in several award winning school environments and can say unquestionably that this is the most talented and hard working staff I've ever had the pleasure of serving.

If you need anything please reach out and ask. If you have talent, time, or treasure to share with our community please also let us know so we can partner with you. Thank you for the privilege and honor to work with your family and 'see' you soon.

Best,

Danny Rock
Principal, VHS

Andrew Guss
Assistant Principal VHS