



Tom Lewis
Founder/President Emeritus

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Leo Givs
Executive Director

March 2, 2020

MEMO: After-School Programming Update

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Dear TFS supporter,

I pray that you, your families, friends, and colleagues are healthy and safe. I am writing to update you on how The Fishing School (TFS) is coping with and managing through changes resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic. During this challenging time, as we are now in our 30th year of operation, we are reminded of the compassion for others and the mission-driven tenacity that were hallmarks of our Founder, Tom Lewis', work with students and families in those early years. We are marshaling all of those organizational values as we have committed to tend to the needs of our staff, our students, and their parents during this difficult time. On March 13th, we decided to close our office indefinitely and have all staff work remotely. On March 16th, public schools in the District of Columbia closed, causing our afterschool programs to be suspended. Rather than ceasing operations, we focused on equipping our staff and engaging our students and parents virtually.

Please continue reading below for important updates.

- **Caring for our staff:** We have taken necessary steps to ensure the safety of all TFS employees. Our team members are leveraging all available teleworking tools to ensure productivity, including Microsoft Teams, teleconferencing, and videoconferencing applications. Over 32 of our team members are part-time hourly instructional staff assigned to our partner school sites. Typically when schools are closed, these team members are not paid. With the support of our Board of Directors, we decided to pay those team members through the first announced closure deadline of April 1st. We are now working to address the announced extension through April 30th. During this time, our instructional team is engaged daily with virtual training, online professional development, and student and parent engagement.
- **Engaging our students:** Our afterschool program design includes a focus on academic instruction, life skills training, social and emotional development, and parent engagement. We utilize Intelliseeds, an online platform that allows students to practice Math, Reading Comprehension, Language Arts, and Critical Thinking. When school is in session, our students spend at least 90 minutes per week receiving instruction on Intelliseeds. We have collaborated with this vendor to provide all of our students access to the online platform while schools are closed. This arrangement also allows us to track students' engagement on the site. We are now exploring the launch of interactive sessions with our students utilizing Zoom. Those without a computer can use this videoconferencing platform with a smartphone.
- **Engaging our parents:** We are communicating with our parents via phone, text, and email to make certain they have the most current governmental updates and learning resources. In addition, we are sharing customized reports of students' performance on Intelliseeds. Furthermore, we are exploring launching parent engagement activities utilizing Zoom.

Sincerely,

Leo Givs
Executive Director