

April 17, 2020

Dear Hephatha Community,

The past few weeks have been a tremendously challenging time, as our traditional way of life has been altered in a way none of us could imagine. Through these challenging times, our collective priority has been to provide normalcy for our children both academically and socially.

I want to thank each of you personally for working overtime in providing support to the students in making the transition to collaborative learning. There have been growing pains in the complete overhaul in our academic model, but the hard work and dedication made by teachers, parents, students, and support staff have allowed for a model that meets our student's learner needs while interacting remotely.

There has been the thought all along that, "this too shall pass". While we know that nothing in the past couple of weeks has caught God reeling. The "pause" button may have been hit in our lives, but we know that His will shall prevail over any earthly challenges.

We have continued to use the same model of monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and the steps that need to be taken to protect our children as best as we can. Through continued monitoring from local and federal health officials, as well as factoring the local decision of the OCDE, Hephatha administration and the Board of Education have made the decision to continue collaborative learning through the end of May, the traditional conclusion of our academic year.

This is not an ideal decision or situation, but Hephatha will remain pursuant to health officials' recommendations. This does NOT mean that we are "closing school" or "ending the year". Our children deserve closure to this academic year that is comparative to past years. As social distancing guidelines change, options will be discussed as to how our children will have the opportunity to collectively celebrate the 2019-2020 academic year.

In the meantime, we will strive to continue to provide the best academic product we can. Your child's teacher is fully invested in providing a quality academic experience and education for each of their students. Many have been working, on average, 9-10 hour days to limit the academic interruption this pandemic may cause. As a church member, parent, and educator at Hephatha I marvel at the Early Childhood teachers and their determination to rise up in providing a high-end academic experience through collaborative learning. The teachers are committed to maintaining the same academic and relational expectations that have been in place all year.

The strength of the Hephatha community is the connectedness and support we offer each other through times of joy and times of affliction. Let us continue to utilize this strength not only for our children but for one and other.

***"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thank in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18***

- Below is more detail for specific topics of conversation based on Board of Education recommendations.  
**Tuition:** Due to the challenges that this unknown has created, Hephatha has removed the May tuition payment for the Early Childhood Program. Similar to April tuition, families interested in continuing tuition payments or making donations will be issued a tax donation letter. Families that have made bi-annual or annual payments will be contacted directly regarding financial processing moving forward.
- **Summer Camps:** Summer Camps continue to be planned with the same robust activities and adventure as past years. All guidelines issued from the state licensing commission, as well as health officials, will dictate the policy and programming of summer camp.
- **3rd Trimester Assessments:** Hephatha will offer end of assessments for families that are interested. A signup process will be shared in upcoming weeks based on social distancing guidelines.
- **Academic Model:** Hephatha will continue to maintain current standards and academic expectations.
- For a summarized report of our Collaborative Learning Survey, refer to the link provided in your email. Due to the personal nature of the comments, they will not be shared. If you would like to discuss these findings in further detail please reach out to myself or Mrs. Mora.

In Christ,



Eric Deyke  
Principal  
Hephatha Lutheran Church and School