

MACOMB ACADEMY

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Dr. Anne-Marie Sladewski
Executive Director

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Dear Macomb Academy students, guardians, families, and caregivers,

The calendar tells us we are approaching the final week of April. As I think about May being right around the corner, I am reminded of a joke I learned when I was in elementary school. Question: *If April showers bring May flowers, what do May flowers bring?* Answer: *Pilgrims!* That will either make you smile or groan, or run to tell it to someone in your house, another family member or a friend. They say laughter is the best medicine. As we continue to find ways to interject humor into the day while we are away from our typical daily routine, I hope you are using laughter as the best medicine to take pleasure in the daily joys in life. My wish for you this week is that you are having fun, and laughter is what uplifts and sustains your overall well-being.

In my last letter I wrote about the planning and development process of the Macomb Academy Continuity of Learning Plan in Response to COVID-19 (CLP). At the time, our CLP had been submitted for review to The Center for Charter Schools, Central Michigan University. I am pleased to report our CLP has been approved and sent to Michigan Department of Education and the Federal Treasury Department. You may view a copy of the approved Macomb Academy Continuity of Learning Plan in Response to COVID-19 on our website. It is located in both the *Transparency Reporting* and *the COVID-19 Updates and Activities* icons on the homepage. Please contact Macomb Academy if you would like to receive a copy of the CLP sent through the U.S. Postal System or to your E-Mail address.

In many ways, the approval of the CLP represents a new beginning for our students. We will begin the fourth and final quarter of the 2019-2020 school year implementing the next phase of continuing learning while at home. This new phase will involve different methods our staff will use to provide and support instruction for the remainder of this school year.

Over the past month, teachers have been connecting with students to provide meaningful review, practice and enrichment activities. Family members and caregivers have provided purposeful guidance and support. As we build on these experiences, the next phase will extend to learning in all three transition domains, which are the foundation of the Macomb Academy curriculum. Instruction and learning activities will focus on independent living, education and training, and employment. As we make the transition to the next phase of learning, we want to make sure that learning is available to and accessible for all students. Macomb Academy is made up of different kinds of learners with individual needs. We will need your help in determining what is going to work best for you while you are learning at home.

You will be receiving a personal phone call from a Macomb Academy staff member who will have a conversation with you. The purpose of the call is to plan for what technology and other resources you

have available, and how we can best support you for learning activities and opportunities for social connections. We will also ask about the support you have available to help with learning while at home. The call may come from a phone number you do not recognize since staff members will be calling from phones away from Macomb Academy. Please take that into consideration when you receive a call from a number you may not recognize. As we settle into the routine of this phase of learning, your patience and flexibility are appreciated. There will be an adjustment period before it runs smoothly.

You will continue with learning while at home with three goals in mind:

1. *Ongoing and Meaningful Instruction*: allowing you to continue learning at home with meaningful instruction and feedback from staff through the format that works best for you,
2. *Social Connection*: creating a sense of continuity and helping you maintain social connections with Macomb Academy during the extended school closure, all while helping you to manage any possible worries or fears, and
3. *Equitable Educational Supports*: providing appropriate resources and personalized supports so that you can continue to progress in the skills and knowledge of the Macomb Academy curriculum.

Following the initial information gathering conversation, your transition teacher will work with you to develop a Contingency Learning Plan. The Contingency Learning Plan will outline, to the best extent possible, the strategy that will be in place for you to make progress toward your IEP goals while you are at home for the remainder of this school year. You are important in the development of the plan, just as you are when we have your IEP meeting.

The transition to the next phase of learning will present new experiences for everyone. New experiences always have a mix of challenges and opportunities. By working together, we can make sure that Macomb Academy remains the stable force and inspiration that you need and deserve to achieve your vision and make a successful transition to adult independent living.

I have attached a copy of the April 2020 *Family Matters* fact sheet publication from Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education (MDE OSE.) The Family Matters publications provide students and their support network with information about special education and other resources. The documents are easy to read and give links to more in-depth resources. This one centers on navigating extended time away from school, specific to students receiving special education services. The information may be useful to you as you implement strategies at home while away from school. Past editions of *Family Matters* are available on the MDE OSE website: https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6598_88187_81739---,00.html.

Please know how appreciative and proud of you the staff and I are of everything you are doing at home. We know you are working hard and doing things that are out of the ordinary. Change is hard, especially when we didn't know it was coming. You have done very well. Thank you for keeping the Macomb Academy community alive. Please let me know how I can continue to support you.

Warm regards,

Anne-Marie Sladewski, Ed.D.