

The School District of Philadelphia  
**Academy at Palumbo High School**  
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Ms. Kiana L. Thompson, Principal   Ms. Charmelia D. Bond, Asst. Principal  
***Griffin Pride: Nothing Less Than Success!***

July 10, 2020

Dear Palumbo Family,

It seems like such a long time since we've been together, but the fall is quickly approaching. Within a short time, several important decisions will be made regarding the future of public schooling as we know it. Until there is a vaccine for Covid 19, we know there will be changes made to our daily routines in and out of school. These decisions will be based on State and School District guidelines, along with what will work best in our building. There has been much conversation over the past few weeks between the School District and principals in regards to what school opening will entail. However, with so many unknowns right now, it is impossible to make any solid decisions. Dr. Hite has anticipated a reopening plan for the district to be presented around July 15, 2020. However, the health situation in the city of Philadelphia in late August will ultimately determine if we are to come back to school in person, in shifts, fully remotely, or partially in person and partially remotely.

Whatever the outcome, it is our responsibility to continue to offer you the same high quality education we offered pre-Covid. The plan you were under from March - June was not the model most suited for optimal learning, and we will be more prepared to handle a remote situation than we were this Spring. With that, you will be held more accountable for your participation in your learning as well. We want to ensure that if we are suddenly forced into a remote situation again, teaching and learning will be able to continue seamlessly.

Over the summer, the district will be providing information on technology to ensure that each student will have access to the equipment needed for the upcoming year. Additionally, teachers will be planning and preparing to be able to support your needs in many different formats. We know that we are in uncharted waters. We have never been given a situation like this before. Over the past six years as principal, it has been my job to have all the answers, and if I didn't have the answer, one could give me a couple of days and I could find one. Those days seem to be gone. There are many questions I receive daily, and many questions I am asking of my leaders, who don't have them either. We will have to all work together, have patience and understanding, and do our part to be responsible and adhere to necessary guidelines and precautions so that each and every one who enters our building stays healthy.

In addition, we are riding a new wave of social justice in America. We will not let Covid-19 distract us from working to become unapologetically antiracist. As a school family we will not ignore issues of injustice, racism, or sexism towards any group. We will structure activities and programs that encourage equity in all aspects of our school community. These too are uncharted waters, as we have never existed in an antiracist society. We know we cannot fix every issue or change everyone's biases overnight, but we will make time to be reflective and proactive in addressing racism where it exists.

Academy at Palumbo, we have our work cut out for us in the 2020-21 school year to say the least, but together we will figure things out. Each class is facing its own challenges that will need to be sorted through:

### **Class of 2024:**

Welcome! I'm so sorry that we have to meet this way. I'm sure you never expected to start high school like this! We want to welcome you to the Palumbo family with the same level of excitement and energy as we have welcomed all of our 9th grade classes! You will be our 15th graduating class, and that in itself is exciting! After July 15th, we will make a determination as to whether your 9th Grade Welcome will be in-person or virtual. I don't feel it's fair to meet with you prior to that since things are changing day by day.

In the meantime, please complete the admission forms below and email to [palumboadmissions@gmail.com](mailto:palumboadmissions@gmail.com). **The medical forms should be printed out, completed by your doctor and returned by the start of school.** If you are no longer planning to attend the Academy at Palumbo, please notify us in writing by sending an email to [palumboadmissions@gmail.com](mailto:palumboadmissions@gmail.com).

**Once you complete the paperwork, you must print the form as a PDF to save your completed paperwork.**

[Incoming Student Admission Forms](#) (Due by August 3, 2020)

[Incoming Student Medical Forms](#) (Due by the first week of school)

[Access Summer Reading Assignments here.](#)

### **Class of 2023:**

You all were the stars of 2019-20! Academically, you soared with outstanding grades and behavior. I'm excited to see what you do as you find your way and your class develops its unique mark on the school. I have very high hopes for you as you begin to explore Honors and AP classes and choose your clubs and sports once we are able.

[Access Summer Reading Assignments here.](#)

### **Class of 2022:**

To my largest, most stimulating class - you're officially upperclassmen! For the past two years, I'm sure you've heard over and over again that 11th grade is your most important year. Well, it's here! Continue to work hard to improve your transcripts and build your resumes. If you haven't joined a club, it's time. This is the year that colleges will look at for acceptance, and I'm sure that as a result of Covid they will be looking harder at what you've done outside of the classroom in order to get a clear picture of the type of scholar who is applying to their school. Despite the circumstances, take this year to build on the foundation you have established in 9th and 10th grades.

[Access Summer Reading Assignments here.](#)

### **Class of 2021:**

To my rising seniors, I thought I felt bad for the Class of 2020, but I feel equally as bad for you, as you are starting your senior year off in a state of vast uncertainty. I know there are so many things running through your minds as you enter your senior year - SAT or Test Optional? To stay on campus or commute? To attend college, military or trade school? - and you have to figure this all out without knowing how many days/hours you will be in school. Will you have a prom, class trip, or in-person graduation? These are all things that are still unknown. As young adults, we also need you to behave in ways that will contain the virus so we can get back to normal. We want to

celebrate all of your milestones along with you! Your success and your future is our priority. We will make sure you have the college preparatory support you need and access to your counselors and other staff who can help you through your decision making process.

[Access Summer Reading Assignments here.](#)

As your leader, it is my responsibility to equip you with the tools you need to succeed. I must always work on behalf of the best interests of students. My vision for us is one of greatness, one where the public immediately knows who we are, one where colleges are fighting for our students, one where we all consider each of us a family member with unshakeable Griffin Pride as we grow to distinction. Expect to hear from me throughout the summer to keep you updated when decisions are made. ***Please look out for information on a virtual College Information Night for 10th & 11th grade parents and for our 9th Grade Welcome Event.*** I wish you nothing less than success in the upcoming school year!

Sincerely,

*Ms. Kiana L. Thompson,*

Principal