



April 14, 2020

Dear members of the St. James' Academy family:

On behalf of all of us at St. James' Academy, we hope that each of you are safe, healthy, and adjusting amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Like many of you, we are adapting to these times, doing what we can to control the spread of the virus while also holding our friends, families and loved ones close (at least virtually).

We are working with our church and educational partners to protect the health, safety, and well-being of our students, and wanted to provide a series of updates:

- Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS)—including our partner school Harlem Park Elementary—closed on March 16, with that closure currently running through April 24. We are awaiting more information from BCPS as to plans for the remainder of the school year.
- We are working with our educational partners – BellXcel and Harlem Park Elementary School – as they gather information about resources to meet the needs of Harlem Park families:
  - BCPS has provided district learning packets for students each week, as well as [distance learning](#) tools (television and online tools). BCPS is also working with Comcast's Internet Essentials program to provide free online access to all students. (For more, see BCPS COVID-19 updates [FAQs](#) and [news updates](#), or an informal [list of online access resources](#) from the St. James' Academy team.)
  - BCPS is providing grab-n-go meals for all city youth at 18 sites throughout the city. The two nearest sites to Harlem Park are Franklin Square Elementary/Middle School (1400 W. Lexington Street) and Sandtown-Winchester Achievement Academy (701 Gold Street).
  - BellXcel is offering virtual training and team-building activities for program staff and working to minimize the financial hardship that part-time and seasonal employees face during the shutdown.
- We are aware of a significant need for technology solutions for Harlem Park families. Based on a late March survey, the school had only 15 laptops across their student population of 300. [BellXcel, Harlem Park and BCPS are working to get more technology devices to students – but if you have an interest and ability to help at this time with financial or product donations, please reach out to St. James' Academy at \[webmaster@sjabaltimore.org\]\(mailto:webmaster@sjabaltimore.org\).](#)

The St. James' Academy team is also looking at other adjustments to our annual calendar:

- We will reschedule Academy Sunday, a celebration of the Academy's work in the community at St. James' Episcopal Church (1020 W. Lafayette Avenue, Baltimore), from its initial April 26 date. We are working with the church to confirm Sunday, June 14 as the new date.
- We are postponing plans for our spring A Cappella Charity Concert until 2021, but are still currently planning to host our high-energy Big Band/Motown Concert and Dance on Saturday, October 17, 2020.
- We are still considering whether to hold our Summer Academy program in 2020. As the board follows the COVID-19 epidemic, response measures, and their impact on the health and safety of our children, we will announce further plans.

In the meantime, we urge each of you to stay safe and healthy during this time by following public health guidance provided by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Maryland Department of Health](#) and [Baltimore City Health Department](#), as well as the [March 30 "stay at home" order](#) issued by Maryland Governor Larry Hogan.

Many thanks for your support for the mission and work of St. James' Academy in this community. To get more regular information from St. James' Academy, please visit the Academy's website at <http://www.sjabaltimore.org> – and contact [webmaster@sjabaltimore.com](mailto:webmaster@sjabaltimore.com) to join our email list.

As all of us work to respond to unprecedented health and educational challenges, we ask that you continue to send emotional support to our students and protect yourselves and the ones you love.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Boston

President  
Board of Directors  
St. James' Academy