



UTOPIAN

ACADEMY FOR THE ARTS

2750 Forest Parkway Ellenwood, GA 30294
470-446-1070 (Office)

Dr. Artesius Miller
Executive Director

Dr. Selina Dukes-Walton
Elementary School Principal

Dr. Ron Boykins
Middle School Principal

Joshua Menifée
Board Chairman

July 17, 2020

Dear UAFA Community,

Utopian Academy for the Arts takes pride in offering families an exceptional learning environment that allows students to develop their talents as scholars, artists, and leaders. I have been honored to watch their growth in school performances and have praised their clever and creative ideas in the classroom.

As much as I have been looking forward to welcoming a new group of elementary and middle school students to campus on Aug. 3, 2020, the spike in COVID-19 cases in Georgia and across the nation, is concerning. It warrants us to consider changing course to protect the health and safety of UAFA students, employees, and families. In the short time since our last communication on July 9, we made the difficult decision to delay the opening of school until Aug. 5 and switch to online learning for the first nine weeks of classes.

Our decision is supported by the data. While there are only a little more than 3,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Clayton County, the virus is spreading rapidly across the Southeast in new outbreaks. Scientists have identified Miami, which is only 650 miles away, as the new epicenter of the global pandemic. Currently, there are nearly 3.6 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States and more than 130,000 in Georgia. As families use their summer vacation to travel both locally and out of state, UAFA could not guarantee the health and safety of our campus for in-person instruction on Aug. 3.

I believe that temporarily moving instruction online for the first nine weeks of classes is the safest path forward. Rest assured that we will revisit the possibility of offering in-person instruction again in the fall after we take another look at the state health department data and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control. Our online instructional model will be interactive, comprehensive, and robust. One of the highlights of this opportunity is that students will be furnished with **free computers** to use for the academic year!

Our middle school students will receive new Chromebooks. Our elementary school students will receive Samsung tablets. Distribution of the devices will begin on July 25. Details on pick-up times and locations, as well as information on academic programs, class schedules, and assessments, will be discussed at orientation meetings next week.

The orientation meeting for elementary school students in grades K-1 will be held at 5 p.m. on July 23. A Zoom link will be provided for the occasion. Sixth-grade orientation will also be held at 6:30 p.m. on July 23. The school community meeting for families with students grades 7-8 will be held at 6:30 p.m. on July 28. Zoom links will be provided for both middle school meetings. Check the UAFA website and your school emails for more information.

At UAFA, we are committed to maintaining the quality and continuity of our arts and academic programs, whether our students are on campus or learning remotely. We will use Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and



UTOPIAN

ACADEMY FOR THE ARTS

2750 Forest Parkway Ellenwood, GA 30294
470-446-1070 (Office)

Dr. Artesius Miller
Executive Director

Dr. Selina Dukes-Walton
Elementary School Principal

Dr. Ron Boykins
Middle School Principal

Joshua Meniffee
Board Chairman

Infinite Campus as the platforms for teaching and learning in virtual classrooms. In addition, we will also explore new and innovative ways to connect with each other in small groups and as a school community.

Here is a sample of some of the offerings that our virtual academic program will include:

UAFA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Classes will begin at 9 a.m. in the abbreviated school day.
- Kindergartners will receive instruction on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. and from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
- First graders will receive instruction on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. and from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
- Arts instruction in dance and physical education will be offered twice each week.
- Classes will be engaging and challenge students to explore their home environments to search for shapes, colors, and more.

UAFA MIDDLE SCHOOL

- UAFA Middle will begin its school day online at 8:30 a.m.
- Teaching and learning will continue for a full academic day.
- Core academic classes will be offered to single-gender groups twice a week. Girls will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays. Boys will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Virtual academic and arts classes will also be offered twice each week on the days when students are not attending core academic classes.
- Project-based learning will be held on Fridays.

FOR ADDITIONAL HELP

Special Education Services: Emery Williams (emery.williams@utopianacademy.com)

Technical Questions: Caleb Land (Caleb.Land@utopianacademy.com)

Parent Liaison support for supporting families with online students: Janine Slater (janine.slater@utopianacademy.com)

Thank you for your flexibility and for entrusting UAFA with the education of your child. Please continue to check the school's website for updates on our elementary and middle school programs. Do not hesitate to contact us with your concerns. Please stay healthy.

We are in this together.

Sincerely,

Dr. Artesius Miller
Superintendent, Utopian Academy Charter School Network