



Head of School Report to the Board of Directors

September 14, 2020

Greetings Centennial Academy Board of Directors,

The 20-21 academic year is officially underway! Although we are 100% remote at the current time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school is still in session for Centennial Academy scholars. At 8:00 am every morning, our scholars are ZOOMing into Cyber Academy via Google Classroom for CREW, our social emotional learning component, and then engaged in synchronous and asynchronous instruction proudly wearing their Centennial Academy uniforms.

For your review, I have included a few of this month's updates below:

Academic Excellence: In a new study commissioned by [redefinED atlanta](#) and [Learn4Life, Quantifying the Impact of School Closures on Metro Atlanta Student Proficiency](#), it is estimated that about 21,000 fewer students in ELA and 29,000 fewer students in Math are now on track for grade-level proficiency than prior to COVID-19. This study also projects that now only three out of ten, 30%, economically disadvantaged students and students of color will achieve grade-level proficiency, which reverses recent gains. We are reviewing the research and still setting ambitious, yet what we believe to be attainable, goals for Centennial Academy in that 60% of our scholars will demonstrate proficiency in Math and ELA as measured by STAR benchmark data by the end of the academic year and 60% of scholars will meet their Typical Growth measure as indicated by iReady assessment data. We are still in the process of administering assessments to scholars, both virtually and in-person for K-2 scholars, and will be prepared to share baseline data from these nationally norm-based assessments during our next board meeting.

It is important to note that the aforementioned study identified innovative practices across Metro-Atlanta to aid in mitigating the projected learning loss and those practices can be found in the instructional program that we are delivering at Centennial. A few examples include:

- Restructuring instructional time to provide for intensive small group interventions
- Rearranging professional development opportunities to allow for more PD, providing new teachers with support via effective onboarding, and delivering PD via Zoom to model how to use tools
- Expanding social-emotional support by implementing an Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum
- Encouraging trauma-informed care and practices by forging partnerships with wraparound care providers
- Supporting extra-educational needs including arranging food distribution via APS meals and ensuring wireless connectivity and devices (*To date, we have distributed over 400 devices and 50 internet hotspots*)

School Culture: On the very first day of school, it was heartwarming to see nearly 600 participants, scholars, parents, and staff, log on for our first ever school-wide Monday Morning Motivational Meeting via Zoom. It has remained important to us to create a sense of connectedness among the Centennial community despite the limitations imposed by remote learning. Therefore, we start every Monday with a community-wide meeting, followed by classroom CREW sessions Tuesday-Friday. In the first three weeks of school, we have hosted a Movie Matinee, Dance Party, and Upper Academy "Kickback", all virtually, to fully engage with our scholars. This Wednesday is our first Leadership Day, followed by a virtual Scavenger Hunt on Monday, and Convocation on September 30th. At Centennial Academy, our traditions are important to us so we haven't changed "*what*" we do but rather "*how*" we do them. This creativity and collaboration is what has led to our steady increase of average daily attendance which as of today is 89.1%, higher than the APS district average of 87.2%. We are confident that we will meet our goal of 90% of scholars attending 90% of enrolled days by the end of the academic year.

Professional Capacity: As planned, we have launched our new Performance Management System for all Centennial staff members. In addition to TKES/LKES for the instructional team, 100% of Centennial personnel will receive an annual evaluation based on core competencies and adequate progress on meeting professional/personal goals. Supervisors are currently meeting with their direct reports this week to review expectations and set goals for the academic year.

Community Partnerships: Centennial Academy will continue to cultivate family and community partnerships to ensure success for every scholar. This month, we are particularly thankful to our Centennial Academy board members:

- Thank you **Ms. Rewa Berry**, for connecting us with Cascade United Methodist Church and providing over fifty \$50 DSW gift cards to ensure that scholars could purchase a new pair of shoes as a part of the “*Soles to Souls*” program!
- Thank you **Dr. Howard Grant**, for the Atlanta Housing Authority’s donation of over 500 books to support Centennial’s Literacy Campaign to ensure that all K-8 scholars have access to high quality literature at home!
- We are also thankful to our community partners at Centennial Place Apartments for hosting an ice cream social this month to officially welcome our incoming Principal, Mr. Shaun Heckstall, to the neighborhood! A special thank you is extended to **Mr. Egbert Perry**, Integral, and Ms. Valencia Mitchell for planning this warm welcome!

We have also intentionally engaged with our parent community, particularly by hosting weekly Parent University sessions to ensure training and support is provided to our newly adopted “*Home-based Educators*.” Thank you to the Atlanta Speech School and the Rollins Center for Language and Literacy for serving as guest facilitators during last week’s meeting!

Fundraising: We continue to be actively engaged with Coxe, Curry & Associates on fundraising efforts for the 20-21 academic year as we aim to meet our goal of securing a minimum of \$100,000 through fundraising activities (*grants, gifts, donations, etc.*) by the end of the academic year. This month, we have submitted grants for the Atlanta Foundation in the amount of \$20,000 and the Branan Foundation in the amount of \$15,000. Additionally, we are pleased to report a financial gift in the amount of \$400 from our new Friend of Centennial, Ms. Lisa Wade, a partner with Swift Currie.

Final Enrollment: The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) reported that enrollment is in flux across metro-Atlanta and the same holds true across the country as reported by the [Los Angeles Times](#). As parents choose alternative options such as co-op learning pods, private school, online school, homeschooling, or moving out of the district altogether, we have experienced a significant decrease in enrollment at Centennial as well. After accounting for the no-show withdrawals of over 100 scholars, 55 of which were transient scholars, at the end of the ten day count, our current enrollment is 682, significantly below our capacity of 800.

| Grade Level | Total/Capacity | Grade Level | Total/Capacity | Grade Level | Total/Capacity |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Kindergarten | 62 /100 | 3rd Grade | 76 /90 | 6th Grade | 70 /85 |
| 1st Grade | 73 /90 | 4th Grade | 93 /90 | 7th Grade | 74 /85 |
| 2nd Grade | 89 /90 | 5th Grade | 82 /85 | 8th Grade | 63 /85 |
| | | | | All Grades | 682 /800 |

Due to our participation in last year’s unified enrollment lottery application, we were able to increase our exposure across metro-Atlanta, resulting in a pretty healthy waitlist of over 500 scholars. Therefore, we have opened up our waitlist at this time in order to offer a first wave of an additional 75 seats to families across the K-8 grade band. However, we will remain slightly conservative in our approach to provide a cushion for families enrolling within the primary attendance zone and transitional housing communities, while also offering seats to our Centennial staff.

At this time, the Atlanta Public Schools District has not made a final decision regarding reopening during Phase II in the month of October. During the last health data report, levels of community spread were reported as steadily decreasing across Fulton County. Once levels have been determined to reach Mild/Moderate (6-100 cases per 100K), then we can explore the possibility of some face to face instruction via a hybrid model. As always, we remain committed to ensuring the health and safety of our entire community and we will craft a hybrid plan to this end. Our target for safely returning to the building is after the winter holidays, January 6th, and we hope to share the first draft of our hybrid re-entry plan during next month’s board meeting. Now, more than ever before, we are #CentennialSTRONG!

Warmest regards,

Tequila Lamar

Tequila Lamar, Head of School