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Achievement Prep Charter School Scholars In Southeast DC Learning at Home with Technology and Support from Teachers and Parents During COVID-19 Crisis

April 2, 2020 – Washington, D.C. – Scholars at Achievement Preparatory Academy public charter school in Anacostia are continuing their studies at home thanks to Internet technology and the dedication of teachers and parents committed to providing a first-rate elementary and middle school education to children in the Southeast Washington, DC community. The school’s campus is scheduled to remain closed through at least April 28.

Remote learning for Achievement Prep scholars and instructors began Tuesday, March 24 with materials shared online and in hard copy, since not all scholars have access to technology and high-speed Internet. Achievement Prep also is offering special social services to ensure that emotional support is available for scholars and their families.

“We know this is a very stressful time for everyone, with so many uncertainties and daily routines completely turned upside down,” said Shantelle Wright, founder and CEO of the Achievement Prep network. “We want to be sure that our scholars and their families receive all the care and support they need – not only academically, but also emotionally.”

Since the start of the remote learning period, teachers have been checking in with scholars and families by phone several times a week. Achievement Prep has implemented a tracking system to ensure families are contacted and that teachers and scholars have all the necessary tools and resources.

The school is also continuing to offer services through its partner, AprilMay Company, Inc., to provide emotional and behavioral health support for scholars and their families. This includes grief or trauma counseling, family therapy and help with access to community resources. In addition, updated training is being provided to Achievement Prep teachers and staff.

“We are looking at more ways to continue to communicate with our families and our community through a variety of platforms,” Wright said. “Our goal is to assist our teachers so that they can provide the best experience for our scholars, not just in terms of education, but also in terms of feeling safe and supported. We also want our families to still feel connected and to make our scholars feel as normal as possible under these new conditions.”

Starting on April 6th, teachers will offer daily virtual office hours through a “Zoom Room.” This will allow teachers to cater to the unique needs and challenges of each scholar and his or her family and provide real-time interaction, while still following public health protocols. The school is also exploring ways to help classmates connect virtually, since they know that time with peers is important.

Achievement Prep understands that each scholar has different access to technology during the remote learning period, so the school provided printed copies of learning materials to all scholars while also making them available online, including via cell phone. In addition, the school has provided individualized workbooks to scholars with disabilities or specialized educational challenges that have been prepared to meet their specific needs.

Fortunately for Achievement Prep, remote learning is not a new concept. The school already had several tools in place, including i-Ready online learning programs and Bookshare, an online resource of audible books for scholars with disabilities. Achievement Prep has also shared links to a Google add-on to convert text to speech to assist with reading aloud. In addition, the schools usually send workbooks home with scholars over breaks to minimize any learning loss, so its scholars are familiar with being self-motivated and learning from home.

“While we miss seeing our scholars in person every day, we know this is the best plan for public safety. One of the values we work to instill is determination and we know that we will all get through this if we work together and respect each other,” said Wright.

Another step in Achievement Prep’s COVID-19 response plan was to bring professional cleaning teams into the Ward 8 campus to deep-clean and disinfect all surfaces within the schools, a process that took more than a week to complete. The school will remain closed and Achievement Prep has made arrangements to have outside pick-up points for materials so that no one has to enter the buildings and a safe distance can be kept among scholars, staff and family members.

“It has been gratifying to see so many people and organizations come together to get through this crisis. We want to thank so many organizations, including the city and its ability to negotiate with Comcast to provide free Internet Essentials for all D.C. households and the network of schools and restaurants who are providing meal service while schools are closed,” added Wright. “While no one wants to go through a situation like this, it is great to see that it can bring out the best in people.”

To arrange an interview with Shantelle Wright and to learn more about Achievement Prep’s remote learning program, please contact Gene Grabowski at 202-270-6560.

About Achievement Prep, PCS

Since 2008, Achievement Prep has been preparing scholars to excel as high-achieving scholars and leaders in high school, college and beyond. We believe in developing and fostering strong character in our scholars. Our scholars focus on the development and practice of Achievement Prep’s DREAM values (determination, respect, enthusiasm, accountability and mastery). Parents are our partners, and our partnership is the foundation for the ecosystem of support that will enhance our scholars’ academic experience. At Achievement Prep we are transforming tomorrow today. For more information visit www.achievementprep.org.