



## Atlanta Classical Academy Learning Loss Plan

### **Lower School**

#### **Description of Interventions**

##### Summer Programming

This summer presents an opportunity for some lower school students to have continued academic instruction. The intention of these sessions is to provide a context to remediate and solidify learning, particularly in response to the challenges of the past year. More specifically, the skills and content being taught this summer are to address learning gaps that stem from virtual learning.

Student needs were identified through already-established remediation plans, analysis of assessment data (MAP, Milestones, in-class grades, etc.), and in-class academic performance.

In rising first and second grades, the areas of focus are:

- Phonics/Reading -- phonemic awareness, decoding/encoding, sight word mastery, short sentence reading fluency
- Math -- basic number sense with Number Talk and dictation, simple addition/subtraction, math vocabulary/word problems, bar models
- Handwriting/Composition -- manuscript letter shaping, word writing practice, capital letters and punctuation

In rising third and fourth grades, the areas of focus are:

- Phonics/Reading -- phonemic awareness and decoding in new and multisyllabic words, dictionary skills, inference/context clues
- Math -- multiplication practice, math vocabulary/word problems, bar models, time, money, perimeter/area
- Writing/Composition -- manuscript and cursive, complete sentence structure with correct syntax, parts of speech



In rising sixth and seventh grades, the areas of focus are:

- Vocabulary/Reading -- vocab acquisition, dictionary skills, vocabulary in context, reading fluency and comprehension, context clues/inference/text connections
- Math -- all operation fluency, time, fractions, money, shapes
- Writing/Composition-- complete sentences, types of sentences, paragraph structure, creative independent writing

### **High-Frequency Tutoring**

Students with demonstrated need for intensive phonics remediation will have the opportunity to receive after-school tutoring. Additionally, English-language learners with a demonstrated need for additional interventions will also have the opportunity for after-school tutoring. These sessions would be either with individual students or small groups, and would supplement the whole class and small group instruction which students receive during the school day.

### **Plan for Implementation**

We will host three two-week sessions (three-hour sessions per day) over the summer, all of which are aimed toward remediation in reading, mathematics, and composition.

A variety of lower school faculty members will be teaching over the summer. A range of resources will be used for implementation of the above, with a focus on the core curriculum used during the school year.

Phonics, vocabulary, and reading resources will include **Logic of English** texts and flashcards, McCall Crabbs reading lessons, Elkonin Boards with Unifix cubes, Lexia, Heggerty phonemic awareness resources, **Wordly Wise**, Daily Grammar practice, and varied readings with comprehension question.

Math resources include **Math In Focus** reteaching and extra practice workbooks, operation flash cards, Mini Judy clocks, money practice, SplashLearn, and interactive math games.

Writing and composition resources include Cursive Success, handwriting paper, journals, Lowercase At Last packets, sidewalk chalk practice, and Letter and Numbers for Me worksheets



## **Timeline for Implementation**

We will host three two-week sessions (three hour sessions per day) over the summer, all of which are aimed toward remediation in reading, mathematics, and composition. High-frequency tutoring will begin in the first quarter of the school year and will extend throughout the year. Both approaches will include monitoring of students' performance throughout the year. During the second semester, we will develop and modify future offerings through an analysis of student data, in addition to input from faculty and parents.

## **Upper School**

For those of you that find yourselves on campus this summer, you'll see a familiar sight in our classrooms in the upper school: Mr. Clausen introducing students to the order and beauty of algebra, Mrs. Moss leading a discussion on Raisin in the Sun, and Mr. Han circling his classroom to ask every student personally if they need additional help. These folks are joined by a handful of other faculty members and the roughly 30% of our student body that has returned to Atlanta Classical for enrichment opportunities this summer.

These sessions mark our first response to the challenges posed by our year of virtual learning, and we plan to build on these efforts over the next three years to ensure that every student has access to the full scope of an ACA education. The purpose of this document is to roughly outline our plans for responding to whatever academic losses emerged as a consequence of virtual learning. We'll also describe our efforts to support the emotional and physical well-being of our students as we return to a semblance of normalcy in the fall.

Below you will find our four main areas of focus in addressing learning loss. Two of them deal with the academic skills that correlate most strongly to success in the upper school at ACA. The others address difficulties that emerged during the pandemic.

## **Areas of Focus**

### **Math Support**

- A preliminary review of PSAT, SAT, and MAP data prompted us to give particular attention to developing students' algebra skills. Historically, our students struggle to make the transition from thinking arithmetically to algebraically, and our extended time of virtual learning compounded this difficulty. A student may know their math facts and yet struggle to apply them in new situations or draw conclusions from these facts. If they do not understand the first algebraic laws of math, they will be unable to build upon them in subsequent math classes. By intentionally making algebra the focus of



our interventions, we are emphasizing the problem-solving virtue of mathematics. Students struggling to understand why certain rules (e.g., ratio rules) are true have also struggled to apply those rules in their class (e.g., unit conversions in chemistry class). We will focus on exploring why the rules work in our support sessions. Algebra also acts as a fundamental exercise in abstract thinking. Students practice making general statements from particular observations when they detect patterns in how to graph a parabola, or what the steps to factoring are. This is again helpful in other classes, such as making statements about all cells when observing a few under a microscope, or drawing out truths about all people from the stories of a few people in history or literature.

#### Literacy Support

- Our core thesis about academic achievement is that students with strong literacy and numeracy skills can succeed in any subject. The ability to read and write well is as relevant in a biology class as it is in British Literature. While literacy is a relative strength of our school, some students who were in need of remediation did not improve as we expected during virtual learning because of inconsistent attendance, inadequate internet/computer skills, and lack of focus in their home environments. At the end of this school year, the English teachers met with the lower school teachers to complete a kind of skill inventory to determine what a student should be able to do at the end of each grade, particularly in the area of composition. We'll use this information to both refine our curriculum and identify and address student deficiencies in this area.

#### Credit Recovery and Graduation Support

- During virtual learning, many of our most vulnerable students suffered academically and jeopardized their plans for a timely graduation. This created a clear need for additional academic support and a mechanism for facilitating credit recovery.
- Moreover, many of our underclassmen struggled to adjust to the academic rigors of high school and felt under supported as they began to think about their transition into college. In response, we'd like to expand our counseling services and we describe our approach in the section below.

#### Health and Wellness Support

- We will offer two extracurricular, after-school programs designed to promote healthy habits of mindfulness and fitness which will help students re-establish their own wellness after this challenging year. These programs will combine physical training with discussions of healthy thought processes. Because the mind lives through this body, establishing coordination between exercise, diet, stress-reduction techniques, and general habits of executive functioning and time management will benefit students who elect to participate in this programming.



## Description of Interventions

### Summer Enrichment

- Starting in the summer of 2021, we'll welcome upper school students back to campus for two-week enrichment sessions with a focus in literacy and numeracy. For math, we'll focus on three areas in particular: middle school math, algebra, and SAT prep which combines algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. In literature, we'll organize our sessions around excellent books which we didn't have time to read in our curriculum. As mentioned above, virtual learning required our teachers to omit certain texts from their classes, and these summer classes will create an additional space to read and discuss these books. These sessions were received well by our community, and over 30% of our student body will attend one during June or July of this summer.

### High Frequency Tutoring

- Over the course of this summer, we're hiring a team of tutors who will work with small groups of students Monday through Thursday after school. We're building a team with a diverse skill set to ensure that we can support students in every subject. Their primary responsibility will entail tutoring students in core subjects, but they will also assist students in their credit recovery efforts as needed. Some of these tutors will be Atlanta Classical teachers while others will be local experts that we hire from the community. We're aspiring to keep the student to tutor ratio at or below 5:1.

### Credit Recovery and Graduation Support

- After assessing the struggles of many of our students following the first semester of virtual learning, we invested in an online curriculum called APEX and created a support hour at the end of the school day that ran from 3:30PM - 5:00PM, Monday-Thursday. This platform is particularly built to serve students who have accumulated credit deficiencies and it will continue to run through the summer and into next school year. We're paying two of our faculty members generous stipends to oversee this program and make it available to both our in-person and virtual students.
- We're also developing a plan to expand our academic counseling program to give new focus to our underclassmen. Our juniors and seniors have the benefit of meeting regularly with our college advisor to review their academic progress and discuss plans for the future, and we're planning to extend this benefit to our freshmen and sophomores by elevating a couple teachers to the role of academic counselor. These faculty members will meet with students and their families a couple times a year and offer personalized advice on how the student can make the most of their time at Atlanta Classical. I expect this program to play a critical role in addressing some of the lingering academic and emotional struggles following this school year.



### After-school Wellness

- A cross-training program with two levels of engagement will be offered to all upper school students. Students will be able to drop in on workouts during the week or participate in deeper instruction that will teach them lifestyle habits and nutritional approaches in addition to physical training. Yoga classes will also be offered to all upper school students. There will be two levels of classes offered, one will focus on athletic flexibility and the other will focus on restorative stretching. Both will include instruction in mindfulness focused on addressing student anxiety, which amplified during the pandemic and impacted learning outcomes. A faculty liaison will work with each program and facilitate operations and recruitment. They will specifically engage minority students and students from low income families to make sure practical arrangements can be made to ensure they can participate if they desire to do so.

### **Timeline of Interventions**

#### Summer Enrichment

- Summer: Execute six sessions of summer enrichment with focus in math and literacy.
- Fall: Evaluate student performance relative to participation in summer enrichment.
- Winter: Develop offerings for summer enrichment and create a calendar with input from parents. Draft communications for distribution to the whole community.
- Spring: Finalize curriculum for summer sessions.

#### High Frequency Tutoring

- Summer: Build team of tutors for daily, after-school academic support. Develop meeting rhythm and define core responsibilities for tutors. Advertise to parents about the availability of this tutoring.
- Fall: Begin implementing academic support in all core subjects. Conduct weekly grade reviews and quarterly credit reviews.
- Winter: Continue supporting students in all core subjects. Conduct weekly grade reviews and quarterly credit reviews.
- Spring: Continue supporting students in all core subjects. Conduct weekly grade reviews and quarterly credit reviews.

#### Credit Recovery & Graduation Support

- Summer: Enroll all students with credit deficiencies in APEX. Meet with students and families to create graduation plans.
- Fall: Continue to support students enrolled in APEX.
- Winter: Continue to support students enrolled in APEX. Perform credit review at the end of first semester to assess progress and update graduation plan accordingly.



- Spring: Conduct year-end credit review with student and parent. Discuss graduation plan and continue with support in APEX.

#### Physical and Mental Well-being

- Summer: Contract with local fitness (CrossFit, yoga, etc.) and mental health experts to develop afterschool curriculum for the school year.
- Fall: Offer weekly wellness clinics for students to focus on mental and physical strength. Monitor progress through surveys and other assessments. Host local experts to speak on topics connected to mental health.
- Winter: Continue to offer weekly wellness clinics for students to focus on mental and physical strength. Continue to monitor progress through surveys and other assessments. Host local experts to speak on topics connected to mental health.
- Spring: Continue to offer weekly wellness clinics for students to focus on mental and physical strength. Continue to monitor progress through surveys and other assessments. Host local experts to speak on topics connected to mental health.