



# TITAN MONTHLY

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Athlos Families,

The 2020-21 school year is underway. This school year will be like no other that has ever existed and hopefully like no other we will face again. Schools were forced to make tough decisions on how to best provide instruction to the students they serve.

Now more than ever, educators have a heightened duty to support children educationally and emotionally, all the while prioritizing their health and the health of our school staff. Families are being asked to accommodate schedules that neither allow them to continue to work and support their family, or that force them to send their children to school even if they are uncomfortable with doing so.

To meet the needs of all families in these trying times, we have to offer solutions to accommodate all. Choice is the answer. Parents need options that accommodate their individual situation, whether that is sending students to a safe school environment with a normalized schedule or offering a year-long distance learning program that engages virtual learners with access to flexible schedules and local teachers.

At Athlos Academy of St. Cloud, we provided our families with the option of a five day a week on campus program with procedures and practices in place to ensure a safe and secure learning environment or a Distance Learning program through Athlos Virtual Academy.

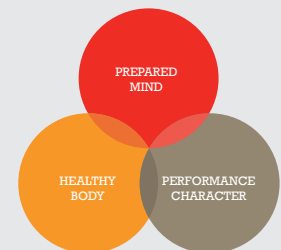
We will continue to working closely with local and national health departments to navigate through this school year to continue to provide a safe learning environment for all of our students mindful of their well-being and mental health.

Respectfully yours,

*Randy Vetsch*



Randy Vetsch



**The mission of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud is to provide high quality educational opportunities for the whole child built on the three foundational pillars of Prepared Mind, Healthy Body, and Performance Character.**

## NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud would like to welcome two new assistant principals to our school. Kim Strandemo will be our Assistant Principal of Grades K to 4 and Tami Schultz of Grades 5 to 8.



### **KIM STRANDEMO** **ASSISSTANT PRINCIPAL OF LOWER SCHOOL**

Kimberly Strandemo received her Master's in educational leadership from Minnesota State University, and is trained to work with a wide range of students from various backgrounds. With over 25 years of teaching experience, Strandemo has worked with students in public, charter and private institutions.

She feels her best quality as an educator is being able to develop relationships with the people she works with. "I have a strong desire to get to know each person I work with, as I believe everyone has a unique story to tell," she said. "Getting to know each other helps to build trusting relationships which I think is vital in working together. When we all go to school loving what we do, and working with a strong team and feel confident in our abilities, it greatly impacts the students that we serve."



### **TAMI SCHULTZ** **ASSISSTANT PRINCIPAL OF UPPER SCHOOL**

Tamara Schultz earned her Master of Education from the University of Minnesota, and a specialist degree in educational administration and leadership.

With more than 24 years of experience, Schultz has worked in a number of administrative and management positions for public and charter schools in Minnesota. She has served and volunteered in various community opportunities and maintains strong connections with leadership and state education associations.

When asked about her best quality as an educator she said that she is an experienced instructional leader. "I believe my knowledge will support and motivate teachers to hone their teaching skills," said Schultz. "By helping teachers master their teaching skills, the better the student learning becomes."



## TRANSPORTATION

With growing restrictions impacting school transportation services in the area, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud had to be resourceful with school bus transportation. For the 2020-21 school year, we contracted with two different companies to make this happen. These two companies are Minnehaha Transportation and Bemidji Bus Line. As more families are deciding to choose their children getting to and from school via a bus, we are looking at adding more buses which may require some route changes in the near future. We will keep you all updated and informed through the process.



## Distance Learning Information

### DISTANCE LEARNING PREPARATION

All families should be prepared to move to distance learning. There is always the potential that Athlos Academy of St. Cloud may need to move to distance learning at some point during the 2020-21 school year. It is important that you understand the platforms and how to navigate through the virtual settings to ensure your children are successful with virtual learning.

There are recorded tutorials on our school website. These tutorials are also translated in Somali and Spanish. These tutorials can be found at <https://athlosstcloud.org/clever-tutorial/>

Become familiar with how to best help your child now so that you can be prepared if that decision is made.



Below is an article posted to the  
St. Cloud Times written by  
Randy Vetsch!

September 18, 2020

[www.sctimes.com](http://www.sctimes.com)

The COVID-19 pandemic is having an unprecedented impact on education. Since March, educators have been scrambling to meet the needs of diverse learners in the state of Minnesota while keeping the health and wellbeing of students as a top priority.

We have relied on creativity to find new and innovative ways to deliver lessons, to keep students engaged and to still build a community in a virtual learning landscape.

Working closely with local and national health departments, we have learned how to best accommodate a safe return to campus and build protocols and procedures for situations we never imagined we would need to prepare for. We have also prioritized the mental health of our students learning from home.

Now more than ever, educators have a heightened duty to support children educationally and emotionally, all the while prioritizing their health and the health of our school staff.

Unfortunately, while we have seen a myriad of options presented to parents, there are not many good options. Families are being asked to accommodate schedules that neither allow them to continue to work and support their family, or that force them to send their children to school even if they are uncomfortable with doing so.

To meet the needs of all families in these trying times, we have to offer solutions to accommodate all. Choice is the answer. Parents need options that accommodate their individual situation, whether that is sending students to a safe school environment with a normalized schedule or offering a year-long distance learning program that engages virtual learners with access to flexible schedules and local teachers.

Last spring, in immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud worked to form a distance learning structure for families and staff over a weekend to ensure that no student learning time was lost due to the closures. Our focus was on ensuring students continued to receive a high-quality education that aligned with the school's model and that it was simple for families to navigate. Get the Daily Briefing newsletter in your inbox.

As part of this effort, we distributed more than 125 devices to students in need of technology and more than 3,800 meals to children in need in the community, whether they were enrolled at Athlos or not.

We utilized our transportation company to take these meals out into the community, keeping our bus drivers employed and meeting those families who could not drive to pick up meals.

Students watched recorded lessons from their teacher to maintain continuity of relationships and pacing in the curriculum; completed exit tickets as a form of attendance and to allow teachers to assess their level of comprehension; and teachers offered live office hours via Zoom for students to ask questions and interact with their peers.

Over the summer, our leadership team built out this program to what is

now Athlos Virtual Academy and is available to any student living in the state of Minnesota for the remainder of the school year.

At the same time, we worked in partnership with local and national health departments and the Minnesota Department of Education to assure we were not only meeting, but exceeding safety requirements. Our goals for our on-campus learners are to offer a safe five-day classroom experience that is as close to a regular classroom as possible.

Last week, we started both distance learning and on-campus learning. We were impressed with our attendance numbers and participation both on campus and online. We are still providing meals daily to our online and on-campus learners and have provided our virtual learners with more than 100 devices.

We are continuing on, navigating this new learning environment in partnership with our school community, our local community and the larger education community nationally. Not only as educators have we overcome adversity, but we have modeled to our students the power of grit, optimism and initiative in navigating their educational journey.

Together, we will continue to work with families and our community to assure we are offering choice to meet the needs of all of our students.

This is the opinion of Randy Vetsch, executive director of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud





Virtual learning can be a challenging change for some students, especially if they're used to attending classes in person. Learning at home also has its rewards and benefits. Here are some great suggestions and tips by educators that can help your families adapt to a virtual learning landscape.

1

CREATE A DAILY ROUTINE



Children thrive on routines and can quickly develop daily habits. Routines have been proven to help increase cognitive function, memory, and focus/self-control. [The Athlos PBIS family matrix](#) can help your family hold meetings, establish expectations and schedules/routines, address needs, and set rules and rewards for family members.

2

MAKE A QUIET SPACE



This can be a simple personal desk or corner in the home away from distractions and others. You can also make it fun by involving blankets/pillow forts, festive lights, and more.

3

LEARN WHO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS ARE



You do not need to know every detail of your child's life, but knowing their class schedule and names of teachers and classmates will aid you in building a list of contacts for help and answers to questions throughout this school year.

4

SET DAILY GOALS BEFORE LEARNING BEGINS



Daily goals can support long-term goals made in the [Athlos PBIS family matrix](#). These can be simple questions, such as: "What do you plan to work on today? What did you accomplish today? What did you find challenging today?"

5

ASK DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS



When your student is finished with school for the day, ask them questions, such as: "What did you learn today? What did you accomplish today? What did you find challenging today?"

6

PROVIDE FREQUENT ENCOURAGEMENT AND REMINDERS



These can be helpful on an as needed basis. Some students need encouragement while others simply need reminders to do the work.

7

TAKE REGULAR SCREEN BREAKS



We cannot emphasize this more, *please take breaks away from screens*. Students will already be spending upwards of 4+ hours on a device. Extended periods of time in front of a screen can cause headaches, fatigue, and disrupted sleep cycles in children.

8

BE PATIENT AND FLEXIBLE WITH YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILD



Virtual learning can be a challenge for the whole family. Just as it's important for students to take breaks, make time in your busy schedule for at least a 10-minute break to think. Practice, daily habits, and patience will ultimately be your key to success.

\*This list has been adapted from a [virtual instructions guide for parents](#) created by the [Louisiana Department of Education: Louisiana Believes](#).

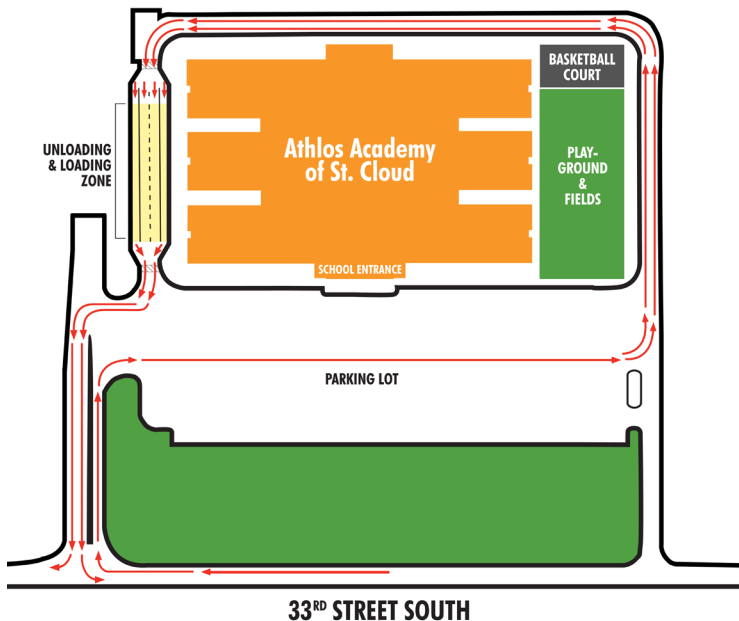
# Run the Athlos Network!

## 4,800 miles



Athlos Academies is inviting each of their schools to participate in a virtual “run” as a way to support the Healthy Body pillar. We mapped out the distance between each of the four Athlos Academy schools and it comes out to a whopping 4,800 miles! Each school in the Athlos network is competing to see who can “run” 4,800 miles as a group.

To reach our goal we can record miles with any type of movement: biking, hiking, running, swimming, etc. Everyone in the Athlos community is invited to participate! For example, if you have a family of 5 and you all go on a 4-mile bike ride, you would record 20 miles for our school. To submit your miles, send an email with the miles you recorded to [social@athlosacademies.org](mailto:social@athlosacademies.org). Include a video or photo of your exercise to have it posted on the Athlos Academy social media pages! Let's see if we can compete with the other campuses!



## DRIVELINE

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud utilizes a unique pickup system called Driveline to help keep students safe at dismissal, allowing students to be released from class at the end of the day in a very organized manner.

[See the map!](#)

[Watch the video!](#)