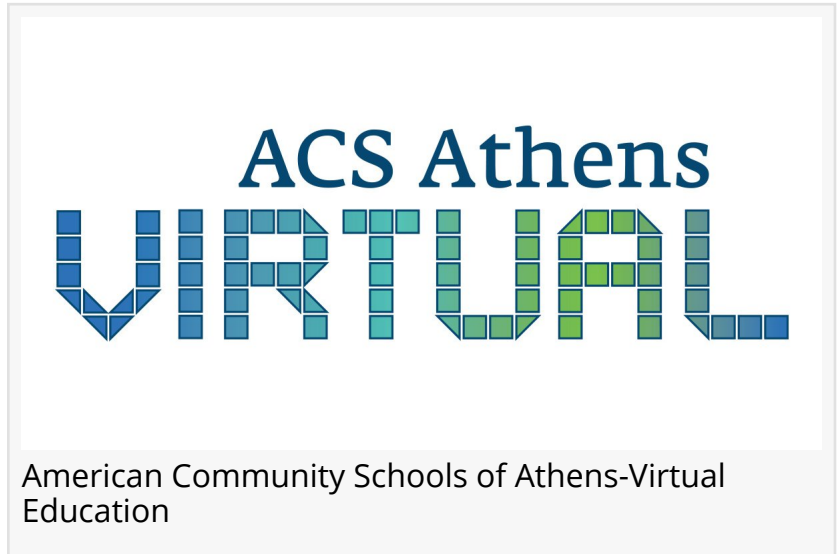


# Teaching and Learning Continues at ACS Athens Despite Challenges

*The Community Migrates to ACS Athens Virtual*

CHALADRI, ATHENS, GREECE, March 12, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For the second day today, learning continues for all 1100 students of ACS Athens, using diverse and innovative educational technology mediums. By utilizing Moodle® learning management system, set up and utilized since 2013, students in grades 5-12 continue their synchronous and asynchronous learning in collaboration with their peers and teachers. Students in grades K-4 continue to have fun learning through Google Apps for education, e-documents, video conferences, and other digital tools.



ACS Athens (American Community Schools) founded in 1945, is an innovative educational institution with 1100 students from 63 different nationalities, that follows the American educational philosophy, offers the American High School Diploma and the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma. The school launched yesterday its Virtual classrooms for the entire school so that learning can continue during the school closure.

“

When everyone else in Athens stopped learning, we started ... in a different way!”  
*David Nelson, Academy Principal*

All school operations, classroom activity, support services and programs assisting students with learning differences continue to take place. According to the President of ACS

Athens, Dr. Peggy Pelonis, “despite some technical difficulties, due to the high traffic on the virtual platforms across the world, ACS Athens faculty deliver lessons and students complete the work necessary. It is important to note that these lessons are not review lessons but rather the continuation of the curriculum and truly meaningful learning.” Dr. Pelonis added: “Such an innovative endeavor required long term planning from administration and faculty and the ACS Athens educators and students have taken on the challenge and proved to be very prepared.”

For the first time since 1990, ACS Athens had to stop its on-campus operations and close the facilities for a full 2 weeks, starting March 9 until March 24. The closure was ordered by the Ministry of Education as a case of COVID-19 (coronavirus) was verified in a Pre-K class of the school.

The on-campus operations had to close... but the school continues to function online through its ACS Athens Virtual platform, for most of its grades. According to Julia Tokatlidou, ACS Athens Dean of Academics and key point person of the ACS Athens Virtual, “our school has been ready to transition to the online realm for many months now, as we have offered a number of our

accredited high school courses online.

The only additional step was to extend this platform to grades 5-12, train our teachers in the most modern tools of e-learning and prepare our families for this eventuality, due to the global outbreak of the coronavirus." Students in grades Kindergarten - 4 depend on e-learning tools, teacher sites, documents, videos and activities that require the collaboration of the parents.

The ACS Athens Virtual platform is powered by Moodle® open-source learning management system used by schools and universities worldwide, which hosts all the courses offered by the school in the form of webpages called "shells", one for each course. Teachers maintain and update their course material daily, which is directed to every classroom they teach. Students meet in a synchronous and asynchronous way, in pre-determined times and at their own availability to see assignments, submit classwork, ask the teachers questions, collaborate with their classmates, do research, and be assessed for their learning. Other than Moodle, ACS Athens educators utilize Google Apps for Education, KhanAcademy, Screencastify, VoiceThread, etc.

Outcomes of ACS Athens Virtual operation will be shared with our community as we proceed with the program.

IB English teacher Dr. Syropoulos mentioned to his students: "This is one of the classes I enjoyed the most!!!! You were very well prepared, that's why our backup plan worked so well! It was fascinating to visit your shared docs and see your thoughts unfolding. You perfectly grasped the idea of narrative omniscience and applied it to Ms. Austen!"

Ms. Mente, one of our First Grade teachers said to her students before the first online day of school: "We want to make sure that your day is productive and that your "school time" is well spent! We also want to make sure that you are staying healthy - mind, body and soul! So keep your hands clean, your body nutritiously fed and your soul energized with the things you love to do during your free time."

David Nelson, the Academy Principal has stated: "When everyone else in Athens stopped learning, we started ... in a different way!"

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