



February 19, 2021

Dear Waverly families,

It was such a joy to have elementary students at the farm this week! We are excited to have 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grade students on campus next week and 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students the following. We look forward to ongoing twice-weekly farm visits for all elementary cohorts and bi-weekly in-person activities for middle and high school students up to spring break.

As you probably know, LA County announced this week that elementary schools may now reopen for in-person learning as long as all paperwork has been approved and safety protocols are strictly followed. At this time, middle and high schools are still not able to reopen until LA County is in the red tier; the challenges of cohorting will continue to make in-person learning difficult at those levels even when we reach this milestone. While most public school districts are still operating remote programs at all levels, many independent schools, including most in the Pasadena area, are moving toward hybrid approaches at the elementary level; some have opened for full day in-person instruction in the primary grades. While the Pasadena area schools are working together and openly sharing information with one another, each school is taking a unique approach given the specific needs of their school community and the resources available.

As you know, Waverly has faced an additional challenge during this pandemic, the flooding of the elementary building and significant construction work as a result. As often happens when a building is opened to the studs and concrete floors, unexpected problems have arisen in the elementary building; these problems need to be addressed and have added significantly to the construction timeline. As an example, we discovered that our drainage system was inadequate and this necessitated a great deal of plumbing work; the silver lining is that the new system will protect us from flooding in the future. We are working closely with our construction company, believe that all surprises have been revealed, and anticipate that we can set up classrooms over spring break. We will keep you posted if there are any changes to this timeline.

Once the elementary building is completed, we plan to bring elementary students back to school. We will continue to have students spend a significant amount of time at the farm and will make full use of the playground for outdoor instruction as well as lots of play time. We also plan to increase the frequency of in-person activities for middle and high school students after spring break. We will maintain a full remote program for all families making this choice through the end of the school year in June. We will share more details about our post-spring break plans by March 22.

To ensure that students, teachers, and families have significant time away from screens, and Waverly employees have sufficient time to set up classrooms and plan for the weeks ahead, we will be extending spring break for four days for students. Faculty will have an additional two days added to their break and will return to work on Thursday, April 8. School will resume on Monday, April 12. (Please keep in mind that families who travel out of town for spring break need to quarantine for ten days prior to the start of in-person activities at school. Please plan your spring break accordingly.) We will compensate for these additional days by rescheduling conference days (now Friday, March 12 and Friday, March 19), making Wednesday, June 9 a full school day, and eliminating the faculty workday on Friday, May 28. Please see the attached calendar for more detail.

While we are all in this as a community, we know that our individual circumstances and needs are different. Some families and teachers are eager to return to the classroom and are understandably frustrated by Waverly's timeline. Other families and teachers are not comfortable returning to school before they are fully vaccinated. We are working to support all members of the Waverly community through our new hybrid program (remote and farm) at the elementary level and the addition of in-person activities for middle and high school students.

We understand that there may be many questions about these plans and hope you will join us for one of two Town Hall meetings planned for this conversation: Wednesday, February 24 at 9:30 am and Thursday, February 25 at 4:00 pm. Zoom links will be sent to families the day before each meeting. While these gatherings are elementary school focused, all are welcome.

We are grateful for the support and understanding of our school community in this year of many challenges.

Looking forward,

Heidi Johnson  
Head of School