



July 9, 2020

Dear Waverly Families,

We hope that you and your loved ones are safe and well. We continue to work daily on plans for next year and want to update you on the decisions made thus far.

Planning for a Safe and Healthy School Year

As we plan for the 2020-2021 school year, the health and well-being of our students, our families, and the faculty and staff remains the highest priority in our decision-making. We are also guided by our commitment to Waverly's mission, including our ideals of community, progressive education, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are learning from the experiences of schools that have reopened in other parts of the world and paying close attention to which models have been most effective at containing the spread of coronavirus. The recently released California Department of Health Guidelines for Schools and School-Based Programs is designed to assist school and community leaders to "plan and prepare to resume in-person instruction." These guidelines provide a framework for our planning as we await more specific orders from local health department officials. While we are awaiting specific orders, we are planning for physical distancing (6 feet) in all classrooms, mask wearing, adherence to hand washing protocols, and health monitoring requirements for all employees and families.

Informed by the spring parent survey and careful review of facilities, we are planning that preschool and elementary students will be on-campus daily. Students will be assigned to classes, each of which will be divided into two cohorts, ranging in size from 8 to 13 students. While both classroom and specialist teachers will interact with each cohort on a daily basis, students in each cohort will not physically mix with students in other cohorts. This will significantly reduce the risk of community spread of the virus and will make contact tracing much easier in the event that a member of the community does become ill. We are making changes to the facilities in order to accommodate the division of each class into two smaller cohorts. We have also installed additional handwashing stations. Cohorts will be assigned specific restrooms, with between two and three cohorts using each restroom, and only one student using any restroom at a time. To accommodate families who are not ready or able to have their child(ren) attend school in person in the fall, we are also planning for a remote learning option.

Our goal for the middle and high school continues to be to maximize school time in person. We have closely measured and inspected our rooms and spaces on both the middle and high school campuses; as is, they do not accommodate student learning within the safety parameters. We have assessed the student capacity in every classroom and have started making modifications, where possible, on both campuses. This includes removal of walls and the addition of shaded outdoor spaces of our current classrooms. We are also negotiating the rental of larger spaces adjacent to campus to allow for students and teachers to have ample space for classes. While our aim is to have all students on campus, we have not ruled out a hybrid model, which would allow for a combination of in-person and remote learning. To accommodate families who are not ready or able to have their child(ren) attend school in person in the fall, we are also planning for a remote learning option. If we determine that the environment is not safe, or if local public health officials mandate that schools remain closed, we are also sharpening our plans for a fully remote program.

The first week of August we will ask all families to commit to either in-person or remote learning for September through December. With firm numbers and the specific orders we expect from local health officials in early August, we will be able to finalize our plans and communicate them to you by mid-August.

Elementary Class and Cohort Assignments

After families select remote or in-person learning and we receive orders from local public health officials in early August, we will place elementary students in classes for next year and cohorts for September through December. As always, we will consider many factors, including grade level, relationships among students, and the development, learning styles, and temperaments of individual students, with the goals of making appropriate placements for every child and creating well-balanced classes and cohorts. With the factors related to COVID-19 added to the equation, we ask that all parents trust the school to make class placements and refrain from making specific class or cohort requests this year.

Thank you for your patience, understanding, and support. We are excited to finalize our plans and throw our doors wide open for Waverly students to return to us in the fall.

Warm regards,

Heidi Johnson
Head of School