Dear Parent,

Wow! I hoped you loved our Sports Banquet and our Field Day as much as our students did! In case you have not heard, GOLD won Field Day! The students’ favorite parts were, “Being able to compete at home”, “It gave me a lot of energy and I did it on FaceTime with my friends.”, “Just having fun at home”, “My favorite part was the WHOLE thing, I loved every single part about it, it was so fun!” and “Being outside with my family.” Thank you for participating in this with them. As we continue with the exciting LAST week of school, we have a few things to share...

**Belonging Pick-up and Drop-off**
We continue to anticipate facilitating a pick-up/drop off during the week of June 15. You will receive a Sign Up Genius once plans have been finalized.

**Report Cards**
As a reminder, parents of students in Montessori and preschool to third grade will receive PDF report cards via email this week. Parents of fourth through eighth graders will be able to access report cards through Option C on Friday, June 5th.

**Summer Reading Lists**
Summer reading lists will be posted June 5th on the teacher’s websites and WMA’s home page.

**Mercy in Action**
If you are experiencing financial difficulties, our community is willing to help. As we are anticipating the need to support more members of our community, we have created the Circle of Mercy Emergency Fund to supplement our regular financial aid. Please reach out to Mark Murray, the Director of Operations at mmurray@waldronmercy.org.

As always, please remember to join us in prayer at 6:30 every night, keeping the Sisters of Mercy, the WMA community, and those on the front lines of the pandemic in your prayers.

**Distance Learning Task Force**
The Distance Learning Task Force has spent the past several weeks reviewing and discussing parent concerns, teacher responses to those concerns, peer Mercy schools, and information from some of our competitors. Last week they finalized their results and forwarded them to our administration.
It is first important to note that the task force members, individually and as a group, were very impressed with how our WMA teachers developed a robust distance learning program that was immediately implemented and subsequently enhanced as the weeks progressed. Additionally, they were encouraged to see that WMA had not just surveyed parents but also immediately implemented changes to address the parent concerns received.

In addition, the task force recognized that distance learning plans were impacted by the age of the students, their ability to work independently, and their prior experience with technology in the classroom. Therefore, while there are many recommendations that are school-wide, some are specific to those grades most affected by this consideration. Below are the recommendations provided, all of which we will be adopting.

Academic Needs:

- Assess students entering grades PK-4 before starting school to determine which material has been mastered
- Assess the reading/math levels for students entering grades 5-8 at the beginning of year
- Create teacher/grade specific plans to communicate student progress and/or concerns
- Determine appropriate amount of large group, small group, and individual instruction time by grade level
- Have students work in small groups on some assignments.
- Provide the youngest students appropriate hands-on materials if learning from home.

Schedule:

- Use a consistent opening and closing of each day
- Communicate distance learning plan and daily schedule information to parents.
- Consider simplifying the schedule - perhaps weekly rather than 6 day cycle - and implement changes as necessary
- Determine the appropriate screen time for students in each grade
- Determine appropriate synchronous and asynchronous teaching time for each grade level, including time spent in special areas
- Determine whether art/music/PE teachers should meet with students 1x/wk instead of on number days.

Student Support

- Require each teacher to provide the opportunity for one-on-one time with students
- Address students’ social/emotional needs, particularly so students feel connected.
- Require students who need support to take advantage of the support services that WMA offers.
- Begin study groups and individual student support in September
- Differentiate lesson plans for students who have learning issues.

General:

- Gather teacher feedback regarding their successes and challenges, both those overcome and those still ongoing, and potential obstacles in using distance learning next year to create a new, stronger distance learning plan for each grade.
• Assess the tech learning needs of all teachers, and provide resources for and require teacher tech and pedagogy PD during the summer.
• Provide “how to” tech resources for parents for platforms, software and devices

Financial
• Because of the initial disparity in the three- and four-year-old programs, preschool, pre-k, and Montessori 3’s and 4’s, between the face-to-face and the online learning experiences, particularly due to the teachers’ and students’ lack of familiarity with the new distance learning approach to technology, the Board of Trustees approved a one-time $1,000.00 credit for current three- and four- year-old students to be applied to next year’s tuition. It should be noted, however, that these programs did increase their technological and face-to-face presence as time progressed. Further improvements are expected in these grades.

Please note that all of these tasks become the work of the next task force looking at the upcoming school year this summer.

Schedule Reminders
June 3
Eighth grade retreat
10:00 Prek end of year closing
12:00 Preschool end of year closing
PM Classroom achievement assemblies grades 3-7

June 4
9:00 Montessori 5 year olds end of year closing
10:00 Kindergarten end of year closing
11:30 am 8th Grade Graduation

June 5
8:30 - 9:15 Moveup day for grades 1-7
9:30 End of year Prayer Service and gatherings

In Conclusion
As I close, I would be remiss not to ask for prayers for our larger community. In the words of Pope John Paul II, “Make all men and women witnesses of truth, justice, and brotherly love. Banish from their hearts whatever might endanger peace.”

And, as we end our school year we give thanks to God for all the teaching and learning that has taken place, for the talents and gifts that have been shared and the challenges that have been faced; for the respect and care that has been given, and for the friendships that have just begun and for those that have grown.

And in this time of deep uncertainty, we are grateful for the faith that has been lived in our daily struggles, for the hope that has lifted our hearts, and for the love that has kept us going. We give thanks for the community that we are, and we ask Christ to bless our Waldron family as we embrace the time with loved ones this summer. Stay safe!
In Mercy and Prayer,
Ann Marie