Dear Parent,

I hope you all are having a wonderful and at least somewhat relaxing summer! I wanted to take this time to provide you with some calendar adjustments and with some information about what is happening at WMA this summer as we prepare for the fall.

**2020-2021 Calendar Changes**

Due to the likely impact of COVID-19 this fall, we have moved two of our days off. Specifically, students will be IN school on Monday, October 12 and Friday, November 6. Christmas break will then be expanded by two days to include Monday, December 21 and Tuesday, December 22, so the students will NOT BE IN school those two days. Parent/teacher conferences that were scheduled for November 6 will be rescheduled in a different format. This change allows our students to be in school in the fall for as many days as possible while increasing the days off in the colder (more risky?) month of December.

**Reopening Task Force**

The Reopening Task Force is formed and the 48 participants have already met several times over the past few weeks. The overarching goal of the Task Force is to recommend to WMA administration reopening policies and plans for the 2020-2021 school year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Task Force is split into several subcommittees that will work together to determine a plan to reopen our school in the most safe and effective manner in September. For your information, the short, three question survey that went out this week will be used by the Task Force in developing plans. Below is a breakdown of those subcommittees and members. Please note BOT indicates a member of our Board of Trustees.

**Health and Safety:** Develop student and adult health and safety policies and procedures using current understanding from reliable sources (AAP, CDC, WHO, PDE, HOP PolicyLab, Montgomery County DOH). Subcommittee members are:
• **Dr. Mark Mikkelson**, Subcommittee co-chair and PENN critical care physician and epidemiologist, and one of the leads of their COVID-19 task force
• **Dr. Nina O’Connor**, Subcommittee co-chair and Chief Medical Officer of Penn Medicine at Home
• **Sr. Karen Schneider, RSM, MD, and MPH**, with a concentration in International and Disaster medicine. Sr. Karen is a pediatrician and has been the peds disaster planner at Johns Hopkins, with expertise in disaster/infectious triage, decontamination, hospital flow, PPE for providers, hospital disaster policy, etc. (SARS, swine flu, MERS, Ebola)
• **Dr. Jacquelyn Aveta**, CHOP pediatrician, part of a larger physician group discussing this topic for school systems across the country
• **Dr. Kate Avitable**, CHOP Cardiologist - has CHOP PolicyLab data & recommendations
• **Joe Santoro**, Physician Assistant, Paoli Hospital
• **Anthony Creato**, Physician Assistant, St Christopher's Hospital for Children
• **Jennifer Babia-Espiritu**, nurse anesthetist for St Christopher’s
• **Lori McLaughlin**, BOT, Attorney
• **Ann Marie Braca**, Principal
• **Candace Flowers** - WMA school nurse
• **Bill Lane** - WMA security officer

**Physical Plant**: Assess physical capabilities and current state of building and supplies; to determine how to implement health and safety policies developed that apply to the physical structure, cleaning, and necessary supplies. Subcommittee members are:

• **Mark Murray** - Director of Finance and Operations
• **Joan Barone**, BOT, former WMA Director of Finance and Operations
• **Jimmy O’Donnell**, Plant Operations
• **Tim Kelly**, Plant Operations

**Academic Program**: Evaluate existing practices and create blended, in-school, remote, and cultural learning best practices; to determine how to implement health and safety policies developed that apply to students and adults, including visitors, and draft appropriate student/parent handbook updates for new policies. Subcommittee members are:

• **Ann Marie Braca**, Principal
• **Theresa Gannon**, Vice Principal
• **Curtis Cockenberg**, BOT, retired reading specialist, WMA alum
• **Maria Leuzzi**, WMA PreK teacher
• **Catherine Rissover**, WMA 2nd grade teacher
• **Bonnie Guarini**, WMA 4th grade teacher
• **Katie DeSanto**, WMA 8th grade teacher and parent
Specials & Extra-Curricular: Determine how to implement athletics, specials, clubs etc. as affected by socially-distant, blended, and/or remote learning environments. Subcommittee members are:

- Kristen Romano, Director of Lower School
- Patty Pappatheodore, WMA art teacher
- Michael Borton, WMA music and STEM teacher
- Adam Dickman, WMA Director of Athletics and phys ed teacher

Student Support: Assess and propose changes needed in student support (social/emotional, cultural, academic, physical) especially as affected by socially-distant, blended, and/or remote learning environments. Subcommittee members are:

- Theresa Gannon, Vice Principal
- Kristen Romano, Director of Lower School
- Dolly Johnson, BOT
- Gina Venezia, WMA support teacher
- Grace Zorn, WMA guidance counselor

Parent Support: Suggest relational, cultural, technological, and grade-level enhancements; to provide input to parent survey questions and review survey results. Subcommittee members are:

- Suzanne Gallagher, WMA Admissions office, parent
- Marcia Penn, BOT, past parent
- Courtney McLaughlin, WMA parent and 2nd grade teacher
- Nancy McKinley, WMA parent and preschool classroom assistant
- Jane Meconi, WMA parent and Parent Association President

Business Operations: Determine how to implement health and safety policies developed that apply to employees and vendors, and draft appropriate handbook updates for new policies; to determine sourcing for required health and safety materials. Subcommittee members are:

- Mark Murray, WMA Director of Finance and Operations
- Beth D’Eramo, BOT, former WMA Director of Finance and Operations
- Klair Fitzpatrick, Attorney & partner in the labor and employment group - Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, parent
- Nancy Cahill, WMA Business Manager
Communications: Share reopening and safety plans with all stakeholders. Subcommittee members are:

- Carolyn Leonard, WMA Communications Coordinator
- Karen McGinley, WMA Advancement Office
- Fran Gallagher, WMA Admin Assistant

Technology: Assess hardware, software, and training needs as affected by socially-distant, blended, and/or remote learning. Subcommittee members are:

- Barb Scott, WMA Director of Innovation
- Caili Fogarty, WMA Advancement Office

Consultants: The following graciously agreed to act as consultants to various subgroups as they are needed. These teachers and parents were a part of the initial brainstorming and will also be brought back to review plans as they are finalized.

- Sandy Evans, WMA preschool teacher
- Eileen Everly, CHOP Pediatrician
- Meg Kinson, WMA 4th grade teacher and parent
- Kirstin Patragnoni-Sauter, Family Nurse Practitioner
- Carrie Santoro, Physician Assistant
- Jennifer Tioseco, CHOP Neonatologist

In Conclusion

If you have not already, you are invited to read the (lengthy) COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics which the task force is using in addition to guidance provided by the CDC, WHO, and PDE (Pennsylvania Department of Education). We are awaiting, but have not yet received, information from the Montgomery County Department of Health.

We will continue to ask for input from the wider WMA parent and teacher community as necessary. If you have not already, please be sure to respond to this survey, mentioned above, by Sunday, July 5.

On Sunday you will receive our traditional end-of-year newsletter celebrating all that the Waldron Mercy family accomplished during the past school year. Going forward, we will also be providing regular updates on our plans as the Task Force work continues. Please keep in mind that all plans are subject to change based on recommendations and requirements from the government and healthcare organizations.
I hope you have a wonderful Fourth of July weekend with your family and I look forward to communicating regularly with you this summer as we continue to navigate the impact of the pandemic. Stay safe and healthy and remember to keep God and Mercy as your focus.

In Mercy,

Ann Marie