Dear Parent,

I cannot believe it is already mid-May! It is wonderful to feel the hope that spring brings as it has finally started to warm up consistently. I am so grateful you have continued to partner with us, and I hope the changes that the teachers made in response to your and your students’ feedback have helped. If you have not seen it, please take a look at our new virtual Morning Announcements which are located on the WMA virtual community website.

Looking ahead to this week...

**Belonging Pick-Up**
An additional 70 families successfully picked up belongings on Friday! So far, we have focused on those students who needed essential materials to complete their curriculum this year. We will shortly announce the June dates after school ends when all students return Chromebooks, iPads, textbooks, and library books, and simultaneously pick-up any personal possessions that are still at school. Please understand that we are using the utmost caution as our staff prepares these materials for pick-up by making sure that there are a limited number of people in the building at any one time.

**Musicals, Music Lessons, Clubs and Other Activities**
We recognize that in certain instances, COVID-19 impacted some of our programs and activities. At this time, we have collected feedback from families and are poised to issue credits and adjustments to your Smart Tuition accounts for services not received. In particular, in the case of our musicals, as a goodwill gesture since the students were unable to ultimately perform we will be crediting families back for the full amount of each student’s musical fee. Please anticipate seeing adjustments to your account in June.

**End of Year Celebrations**
We are excited that our students favorite tradition of Field Day is continuing this year! Our staff have come up with a wonderful plan to have students in grades K-8 engage in friendly, physical competition from their own homes on June 1. Your students will receive additional information as we draw closer to the date.

Our Sports Banquet is also going to continue this year! We plan to honor our seventh and eighth grade students through a virtual celebration on June 2 at 6:30 p.m. If you have a seventh or eighth grade student, your invitation will be in your inbox shortly.
The end of year celebrations for kindergarten, pre-k, preschool, and Montessori will all take place on the dates they have been planned, although the times may have been slightly adjusted. As a reminder, these dates are available on the school calendar.

**Looking Ahead to Next School Year**
In addition to planning for the close of the school year, we are planning diligently for next year! As we do every year, we want to make sure our students have the opportunity to meet and talk to the teachers they will be with next year. Move Up Day for preschool, pre-k, kindergarten, and our Montessori five year olds will be held virtually on Tuesday, June 2 at 1:00. Move Up Day for grades 1-7 will be held virtually on the last day of school, Friday, June 5 first thing in the morning as it always is. You will receive further details and instructions from your homeroom teachers.

As we prepare as administrators for the next school year, please know we are paying careful attention to the evolving situation. We will be considering three possible scenarios for our opening in September: one where we are all in the building at one time (using social distancing - not sure yet we have the spacing for this), one where none of us are in the building (that's what we are doing right now), or open where some of us are in and some of us are out (a hybrid approach that puts a smaller number of people in the building at one time while others are distance learning). We will be forming a task force, including medical advisors, to examine the various options both from a safety and an educational perspective. Additionally we will be looking at our distance learning strategies to determine where we need to enhance our programs.

**Distance Learning Task Force**
The Distance Learning Task Force, composed of WMA staff, board members, and a MESA representative, met over the past few weeks to analyze the parent surveys, changes the teachers made as a result of these surveys, and distance learning data from other private schools. The Task Force has made recommendations to our admin staff that will be shared with the Board Of Trustees this week. You’ll hear more about this shortly.

**Family Support**
Please remember that our community is always ready to support you in prayer. By submitting prayer intentions on our website, the entire WMA community will be praying along with you.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, our community is willing to help. We are anticipating the need to support some members of our community. Please reach out to Mark Murray, the Director of Operations at mmurray@waldronmercy.org.

**2020-2021 Transportation**
As a reminder, please complete the Transportation Form to let us know how your children will get to and from WMA next year.

**Mercy in Action**
As we mentioned last week, our community is joining together to live out our charism and continue the Circle of Mercy in May, a month the Church devotes to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It’s important to us to continue and further our connections with the Sisters of Mercy, especially those who live on campus, during this difficult time. Each homeroom is praying the rosary together for an individual sister, and our students have also begun writing letters to offer prayers for specific sisters living at either the Motherhouse or McAuley Convent. You can find the sisters assigned to your child’s
classroom at the top of their homeroom teacher’s webpage. We encourage you to join your child in writing your prayers to these sisters or praying the rosary for them.

Our traditional summer service program for rising eighth graders is being re-imagined to fit the times we are in. Greg Soltis has figured out a wonderful way to continue and expand the program. The seventh grade class will learn more about this opportunity during their retreat on June 2.

If your student had a retreat scheduled this spring, we are delighted that they will experience this spiritual tradition virtually as follows: Grade 5 on May 21, Grade 6 on May 29, Grade 7 on June 2, and Grade 8 on June 3.

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.

**In Conclusion**

I thought I’d attach part of *A Coronavirus Prayer* by Kerry Weber, Associate in Mercy & Editor at America Magazine, for your reflection. “Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.” I wish you Christ’s peace as we travel these challenging paths. Know that Mary, our Mother, is with us. Turn to her for support!

Stay safe and keep the faith!

In Mercy and Prayer,
Ann Marie