

August 14, 2020

Dear Friends:

This has been, and continues to be, a year like no other. From those early days in March when we were displaced from campus and initiated our ‘virtual learning’ program until the present day, our team has worked diligently to prepare us for a return to on-campus instruction this September. While decision-making at Primary Day has always been guided by our unique mission, never has that alignment been more purposeful, never more deliberate, than it has been in our preparations for campus re-entry.

Quite literally, we have ‘left no stone unturned’ and, as a result, have realized that the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has compelled us to think about teaching and learning differently, to upgrade our facilities and to listen, more carefully than ever, to our community – parents, teachers, staff, alumni and trustees. Our medical task force and faculty committees exhibited both resourcefulness and resilience in uncommon ways and, without exception, demonstrated an uncompromising commitment to the School.

Our extraordinary efforts have born great fruit as reflected in the comprehensive plans for Campus Re-Entry and Virtual Learning that will be published, as scheduled, on Tuesday, August 18, 2020. These plans are organic, responsive, creative and innovative and represent Primary Day as that special school that has always provided *the finest education for the most important years*.

Given the earnestness and sincerity that has characterized our planning to date, and with a deep appreciation for the uncertainties of the moment, I write today to inform you that the Board of Trustees has made the challenging decision to delay on-campus learning for students from Kindergarten through Grade Two. For children in these grades, we will begin the school year learning virtually while planning to resume on-site learning when we believe it is safe to do so. It is our intention to reassess conditions in mid-September in light of local, state and federal guidelines, the community spread of the coronavirus and any new protocols that become available in order to gauge our readiness to return to campus.

As a community of early childhood educators, we are steadfast in our belief that our updated and enhanced Virtual Learning program will continue to be second to none; the achievements realized by our students when they worked away from campus last spring were proof positive indeed. We are also keenly aware, that for our youngest learners, in-person instruction is, in fact, more impactful. With that in mind, and consistent with licensing guidelines provided by the MSDE Office of Child Care, our Pre-Kindergarten children will be offered the opportunity to learn on-campus, with a virtual learning option available. The presence of our youngest learners in school will also provide us with an opportunity in ‘real time’ to implement our Campus Re-Entry plan, making adjustments and modifications as needed.

Having listened to members of our school family throughout the summer, I am fully aware, as is the Board of Trustees, that there are varied perspectives on ‘the right thing to do’. I also know that this decision will elicit any number of responses, from relief to frustration to anger. For me, I am disappointed that a return to campus of all of our students is not yet practical, or prudent, yet I believe that it is important to remember that each of us, myself included, enjoys an indelible bond with this



7300 River Road, Bethesda Maryland 20817
p: 301.365.4355 f: 301.469.8611 www.theprimarydayschool.org

unique school and our longstanding legacy of ‘doing what is right and just’ and for ‘advocating for the best’ for young children. Finally, I am hopeful that, as we reassess the health conditions and guidelines in our community and region and continue to refine our Campus Re-Entry plan there *will* be a time this school year when all of our young learners can and will be back on campus.

Together, we can do this with grace – our children need our forbearance now more than ever.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Scott