



May 1, 2020

Dear Parents,

As Governor Cuomo announced today, school will not be in session during this school year. While I hoped that we would have been able to finish our school year, this will not be a possibility. For our 8th grade graduates and for all of our students, we are brainstorming and planning for an end-of-the-year celebration. The Middle School parents met with teachers and staff yesterday to think about ways we can honor and celebrate them. Whether we postpone an event or plan for June, we will find a way to celebrate with our students and graduates. We also are thinking of other ways to find closure. We will have our end of the year slideshows and are looking forward to other positive ways we can finish our school year. We are working on a plan to allow families to pick up their children's possessions from school.

We have assembled a reopening task force with broad representation of constituencies to plan for whenever we are permitted to open. First and foremost, we want for our school to be a safe place for learning. I am hoping that we will be able to hold our summer camp, if not when we planned, then whenever we are given the go ahead by the governor. We should know our plan by the end of May.

We have increased our financial aid budget to better meet the needs of our community. We also have received word that we were approved for a Payroll Protection Plan loan through the Small Business Administration, details to be determined. We have enhanced our admissions approach to include virtual elements. Although we have some videos of our classrooms and lessons, we will be videoing the school in 360° in the coming weeks to allow prospective parents to see the entire building.

This has been a challenging time for our school community and for some it has been more difficult than for others. Some members of our community have lost their jobs, some have been sick or have loved ones who have been sick. Some are working in hospitals or in other essential job roles. Some children are more eager to learn in this new virtual world, and others are more resistant. The anxiety and mental stress can also take a toll on adults and children in different ways. There are also many bright spots in this new situation. We have spent a lot of time together and this a special gift. Children have learned new skills, like cooking and woodworking. Please let us know how we can support you or your children.

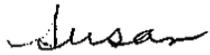
Yesterday, Bethany Burroughs, our school counselor, gave an informative talk on how to help our students manage stress during this time. She gave a lot of helpful tips to help all of us. Bethany's talk was recorded, and you can access it on our website.

Our teachers and staff have been learning, too. Designing lessons to be learned remotely has been challenging but thinking about the way children learn and then working together with colleagues has increased and broadened their skills and knowledge and they will take all of this knowledge back to the classroom with them.

On Wednesday, we hosted an alumni panel, featuring five students who graduated from WHMS. We had 49 people in attendance at our meeting, including Upper Elementary and Middle School students. The alumni encouraged students to work hard, get involved by joining clubs and teams. When asked what Montessori education gave them, they said critical thinking skills, great academic skills, and organizational ability. What do they miss? Fall Family Fun Day, GCAP, class trips, and just the wonderful feeling of community at Woodland Hill, where everyone knows their name.

Thank you for all of your work and support. We are appreciative of your partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan".

Susan Kambrich, Ed.D.  
Head of School