

Dear Grace Community:

I am mindful of the fact that this is my 14th communication to the Grace community since March 3! Having just concluded our annual Awards Chapel where we honored each member of Grade 5 with an award and welcomed alumni parents and past award winners into our Zoom room, I am enjoying a moment of reflection on all that has lasted and been created during this extraordinary time in our collective lives. Despite the distance from each other, no formal training in online education, and amidst a global crisis that has impacted us all, Grace has indeed gone on. There has been a multitude of meaningful connections between parents and faculty, faculty and students, and students and parents. Parents have seen their students learning in a way that they never could have envisioned just ten weeks ago. We have all jumped into waters we have no guidebook to navigate and we have managed with grace, resilience, and determination.

And even as we celebrate all that has been so inspiring, we also acknowledge that there has been so much challenge. I know so many of you are juggling your work with parenting and teaching your children. You may be worried about family members that you cannot visit. And ongoing employment may be uncertain. We are deeply grateful for the feedback you offered in our recent survey of distance learning. Your honest answers about what we have done well and what still needs improvement are instrumental in our work to prepare for what is coming. (You can read the results of the survey [here](#)).

As we near the end of this school year, we are gearing up to turn energy and intention towards scenario planning for the fall. There is currently no clear path or single scenario in front of us, but I wish to outline for you in this letter how we will engage as a set of teams and how we plan to keep you informed throughout the summer. Here is an outline of the structures we are implementing and the outcomes we are striving for in our work:

- **Task Forces:** Given the complexity of the virus and the challenge it poses to our usual plans for starting the school year, we have created a series of task forces that will meet regularly to address the following areas:
 - **Campus Planning and Space:** How can we configure our campus in new and innovative ways so that we can increase the chances of being in person with each other this fall?
 - **Continuous Learning:** How can we grow our capacity to offer a highly attuned remote learning platform for the times when we cannot be in person, and how will it connect and work in concert with our in-person model?
 - **Health and Safety:** What equipment and practices must be in place in order to resume in-person instruction?
 - **Wellness and Support:** How can we be attuned and responsive to the emotional well-being of our students, parents, faculty, and staff in light of the

crisis?

- **Prioritizing Early Childhood:** A priority group for in-person learning will be our youngest students entering Preschool, Prekindergarten, and Kindergarten. How might we use outdoor space for daily learning to keep students healthy and also learning at a deep level?
- **Scenario Planning:** Supported by the Task Forces described above, Grace is studying various scenarios for opening school in September including the [10-4 model](#), and with an eye towards schools in [Europe](#) and Asia that have already opened and been successful.
- **Summer Programming:** While there is much work to be done to prepare for fall, we are considering ways to remain connected during the summer, including organizing summer service opportunities for families, regular Zoom calls with updates, and some potential week-long enrichment classes for students.
- **Collaboration and Professional Development:** Grace is part of local and national associations (AISGW, AIMS, NAIS, NAES) that are gathering information and leaders weekly to consider all of the many tiers involved in good decision making efforts. We are engaged at a high level in these opportunities and we hope to learn from others as we design what is best for Grace.
- **Ongoing Communication:** As we begin the summer, I plan to be in regular communication about our plans. As this is an emerging situation, the scenarios we imagine will also change and shift. **Grace will be closed for one week after teacher meetings (June 15-19)** so that the administrative team can recharge before a long summer of work.

I know all of us are eager to have a clear path for these next few months and the return to school. What I hope this letter conveys is a deep commitment to working collectively to create various scenarios that are responsive and can be adapted depending on where we are with the progression of the virus in September. Safety will be our primary organizing principle, coupled with our desire to maintain the connections and robust community support we have come to depend on at Grace.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me individually with your questions, or if you are able, join me on Thursday at noon for my weekly Zoom call.

Sending you my best always,

Jen Danish