

Dear Overlake Community,

As I write this update to you all the weather has finally hit temperatures (except today!) that reflect summertime in the beautiful Pacific Northwest, and I hope you are able to spend some time with your family and loved ones.

I know we all have concerns and unanswered questions as we navigate through an unprecedented global pandemic; we are not alone as schools both locally and nationally grapple with this new reality. Some things I know for sure: Overlake is committed to doing everything we can to continue offering an exceptional education for all our incredible students; I am honored and humbled to work among such dedicated and devoted faculty and staff; and I am grateful that we have such a wonderful community of families who go above and beyond in helping our community of Owls.

I wanted to spend a little time today updating you on what we do know at this point in regard to our school plans for 2020-21. Throughout the summer our planning teams have spent numerous hours and countless meetings planning for what next school year will look like, with our mission and values driving all of our collective work. These teams, made up of members of our administration, faculty, staff, board of trustees, and parent community, have focused on six main areas: health & safety, daily student life, teaching & learning, maintaining facilities, diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI), and community. The health and safety team has the largest role in our planning process as our focus is on ensuring that when we are able to return to campus, we do so safely.

To help us with this important work, we have successfully hired our first-ever school health professional, Dr. Samantha Hillyer ('01), a practicing physician, who will oversee the school's response to COVID-19. We are also consulting with a professional epidemiologist, Megan Halbrook ('07), who has been incredibly helpful in setting policies and protocols that ensure everyone's safety when we return to campus. I am so grateful for both Sam and Megan's insights and partnership and value their science-based decisions as we continue to navigate these uncharted waters together.

Our teaching and learning team, in collaboration with our faculty, has developed a student schedule that will allow for maximum flexibility to pivot from a distance learning model to an on-campus learning model as the coronavirus outbreak changes in our community. It also provides a consistent structure to the week for all students. We will place students in color-coded Green and Gold cohorts to attend classes on campus depending on which color day it is.

Please join us **Tuesday, July 28 at 11:30am for a Town Hall** session. Nidhi McVicar, our Director of Teaching and Learning, will join us as we walk through the new student schedule and answer any questions you have for the upcoming academic year. The link to join us is here: <https://bit.ly/Townhall-7-28>

Throughout this summer we have continued to follow the guidelines of our public health officials, including Governor Inslee's phased plans. Depending on what phase King County is in on Friday, August 14, we will make the determination as to whether we start the school year on August 31 in our Overlake Combined teaching model (where 50% of the student body attends classes on campus, alternating with 50% taking classes at home) or begin the year with a continuation of Overlake Online (where 100% of the student body is engaged with our distance learning model). Either way we will begin school on August 31 with a full academic program and as robust of co-curriculars as safely possible during this pandemic.

I know there are many more questions that you have. We have them too. We will be sure to keep you updated as our plans progress and new decisions are made, and I thank you in advance for your patience.

Stay safe and healthy and I'll see you next Tuesday at our Town Hall.

Warmly,  
Matt