



*Willow Creek*  
ACADEMY

May 28, 2020

Dear Willow Creek Community,

As you've seen, we continue to host and livestream many important community events and WCA traditions that mark this time of year -- graduation (June 10) and Crossing the Bridge (June 11) chief among them. Today, we write to share our approach to planning the start of the 2020-21 school year amid the unprecedented circumstances of the pandemic, and to welcome your participation in the process.

As we chart a path toward opening school operations on August 19th, WCA remains committed to providing all of our students, faculty, and staff an environment where transformative teaching and learning continues to thrive. The change for next year will be **how** we provide those exceptional learning environments. Given the guidelines from county and government officials, we know school operations will not return to "normal" by opening day. Therefore, we are preparing for both in-class **and** distance learning approaches that ensure we create a healthy learning environment for our students, teachers and staff, while providing both on-campus and virtual learning options to meet the individualized needs of families, students and staff.

The WCA Administration has already begun planning for next year, creating different scenarios based on the latest guidelines. These scenarios will be built around eight Focus Areas of school and community life. The aim is to preserve and expand on the things that make our school so special in the face of this unprecedented pandemic, while at the same time, collaborating closely with Bayside/MLK and the District to set a strong foundation for future unification.

To ensure success, we have assembled a **Return to School Steering Committee** which is identifying and leading the work. We are also creating four **Action Groups** that will drive against the eight Focus Areas. The groups' research and recommendations will be framed by WCA's mission, guidance from government officials, the safety and health of our community, our commitment to equity and inclusion, and input from parent, teacher, and student stakeholders.

Over the weeks ahead, these action groups will research best practices, consult with local and national experts, review our current programmatic and operational design and resources, and marshal the broad experience of our community to provide a plan that instills confidence and safety for all our students, their families, and our teachers and staff.



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The **8 Areas of Focus** and **4 Action Groups** are below:



### **Curriculum and Instruction: On-Campus and Distance Learning**

What do teaching and learning look like for 2020-21 assuming that we need to prepare for both on-campus instruction and distancing learning? How do we make sure that ALL kids are learning well in this new framework?

**Social Emotional Wellness** How do we support our staff and student health and well-being when school reopens? What is the psychological impact of distance learning, and what more resources, programmatic and individual, can we provide to the students, teachers, and parents in our community?

**Facilities, and Operations and IT** What is the impact of health and safety guidance on how we manage, sanitize, and operate our campus facilities? How do we continue to provide healthy meals to all who need them? How do we support the needs of distance and hybrid learning?

**Safety and Compliance** How does guidance from local and national health officials influence our ability to open our campus in the fall? How do we accommodate different levels of restriction throughout the year?

**Events and Community Partnerships** How do we sustain and maintain parent participation, community partnerships, unification initiatives, sports and after-school programs, and other opportunities for student experiential learning?



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**Communications** Recognizing the essential role that communication has already played in our response to COVID-19, what additional methods should be implemented to stay connected with our staff and parent community and respond to questions and concerns that may arise? How do we best reach out to all families so that they have the resources they need?

**Finance and Legal**

What is our funding landscape in the face of California budget deficits? What additional grants and fundraising efforts can we target? What are the legal issues that might arise?

**Staff Support and Human Resources** How do we tailor support for staff with individualized needs within the current funding and HR framework?

If you would like to get involved in one of the Action Groups, please send a note to Ms. Duran, at [kduran@willowcreekacademy.org](mailto:kduran@willowcreekacademy.org) with your preferred focus area.

The health and well-being of our whole community is very important to us. So, we have made a special landing page on the WCA website to keep the information you may need throughout this pandemic in one place. This page, which we will release on Friday, will also link to WCA's updates and planning regarding the COVID-19 precautions.

We have learned a great deal over the last few months about ourselves and our community. As we move forward together in this uncharted territory, we will continue to look to each other for support, guidance, and counsel with generosity and trust. I will provide timely updates as our plans evolve over the next few months. One thing is certain right now, WCA is a learning community like no other, and we will rise above the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic together.

Be well!

Your Willow Creek Academy Board