

Good afternoon WCA Families,

I am writing to let you all know that last night, the WCA Board approved the recommendation of the Reopening Committee **to officially start school on August 26th** in a "distance first" capacity, at least through October 1st (at which point we will re-evaluate our in-person model based on the guidelines from the Marin County Office of Education and the Public Health Dept). Attached, please see the most recent press release from Marin County Public Health announcing the delay of in-person instruction.

We are calling this "distance first" because although the majority of our students will receive on-line instruction initially, we will also be working with families and teachers to slowly and safely begin phasing in our highest needs students (as identified by student data, conversations with families and teacher recommendations), including children of essential workers. Something that makes us feel confident is that we are approaching this model with 4 months of distance "lessons learned" under our belt, including having gathered invaluable data from students, staff and families about what worked well and what didn't. Having extra planning time at the beginning of the year with our full staff will also ensure that we start the year in a highly efficient, structured and consistent manner, and that all staff is leveraged to provide extra support for our most vulnerable students, including some in-person instruction.

A sincere thanks to all of the parents and caregivers who attended this morning's Coffee Hour on Zoom to discuss our plans for reopening, as well as provide your feedback on the unification process with the Sausalito Marin City School District. We will be engaging Reopening teams over the coming weeks to support the process, and keep you updated on the Unification progress. You can find the Re-Opening slide show presentation on our Website: <https://www.willowcreekacademy.org/domain/161>. We so appreciate everyone's ideas, questions and reflections and look forward to our next Coffee Hour on **Thursday, July 30th**.

I'd also like to extend a huge thank you to Kristine Duran, Jen Lawrence, Maya Creedman and the devoted members of the Willow Creek Board, for all of their hard work in strategic planning in recent days, especially being a time that they would normally be enjoying vacation.

On a different and more sombre note, we had some difficult decisions to make in order to manage our evolving reopening costs within our approved budget. Consequently the Board approved the recommendation to furlough two of our beloved staff members, Emilie Rohrbach and Dave Singleton (Coach Dave). It is our hope that we are able to bring back both Ms. Rohrbach and Coach Dave once we return to full on-campus instruction. Factors driving these decisions included the need to support 2 full 6th grade classes and anticipated expenses involved in a remote and eventual in-person opening under COVID regulations. Although our students will still participate in art, PE and Spanish during remote learning, we understand the value of art and the value of these great teachers to our school community.

Wishing you all well,

Emily