

# A Note from...



**John Fowler**  
TCS HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Parents,

I continue to speak to many of you by phone every day, and am finding that these conversations help us to reconcile what we are hearing on the news and what is happening on the ground, both in the larger education world and on campus at TCS.

This is a regular update. It is also an effort to share the thoughts, assumptions and questions that have been guiding our planning, in the same way I have been doing with many of you by phone. The goal is to give you a sense of predictability in this time of uncertainty. I've talked about the importance of hope before- but at TCS, hope comes with muscle. We are moving heaven and earth to bring this community back to normal in a safe way.

### **Update for the Rest of This Year**

In San Diego, a few daycares serving the children of essential personnel have been allowed to open. The Health Department, the preschool licensing agency, and our attorneys are unanimous in saying that independent school preschools may not open, even to children of essential workers.

It is possible that we will see movement on preschool before the end of the school year, but given the pace at which restrictions are being lifted, it is unlikely that TCS will reopen in the next three weeks.

On June 11th we will host a "drive-in" graduation on the field. The graduates will make their traditional farewell speeches while family members listen from their cars. More information on the celebrations for our very special class of 2020 will come in a separate communication.

### **Update for Next Year**

I have communicated our plans for in-person and virtual instruction before, and many of you asked how we can know what will happen. Please see below for a review of our plans and an overview of our decision-making process.

- **We are moving the start date of school to Monday, August 31st.** *This will add six days of instruction to the year.*
- **We are planning for an in-person, full-day, five-day elementary and middle school program in the fall.**
- **TCS will also operate a virtual program for children who remain at home.**

### **The Decision-making Process**

**What we are reasonably sure of:**

1. ***A return to campus in the fall is likely.*** Colleges and universities have begun planning for the fall, in many instances for on-campus residential life as well as in-person learning. Some daycare programs are currently open. Given this, the National Association of Independent Schools and the California Association of Independent Schools have launched fall planning programs under the assumption that our institutions will follow.
2. ***A return will be predicated on social distancing.*** All planning work is focused on social distancing protocols. While we have no specific guidance for K-8 at this time, it is reasonable to assume that we will be required to implement health and safety protocols that track common aspects of the early childhood and the

higher education mandates.

3. ***We are uniquely equipped to meet the physical distancing challenge.*** As discussed previously, TCS has small class sizes and a very large capacity both indoors and outdoors, as well as an overabundance of bathrooms. We believe that we have the ability to exceed even the most stringent distancing protocols, and that our elementary and middle school students will be able to enjoy in-person instruction five days a week.
4. ***If required, we will be uniquely able to resume distance learning with minimal disruption.*** Our infrastructure is in place, and we are bolstering it with capital improvements and personnel (see below).

#### **What we are investing in:**

1. ***We are hiring a full-time distance learning coordinator.*** This person will serve as the liaison for families with children who continue TCS at home, and will work with the faculty, Jon, and Jesse to strengthen our educational and technological capacity.
2. ***We are hiring an additional full-time custodian.*** This employee will help us with frequent bathroom and high-touch area cleaning during the day. We are also investing in enhanced night crew cleaning.
3. ***We are purchasing to support educational and health priorities, including:***
  - Technology to support distance learning
  - Individual desks and chairs
  - Individual school-based student supplies
  - Equipment for enhanced cleaning and sanitation, and personal protective equipment
4. ***We are investing in expert guidance.*** To ensure that our students, faculty, and staff are covered under best practice, we are working with attorneys to review all new policies and procedures. Once we receive specific health and safety recommendations, we will also seek advice from professionals in those fields.
5. ***We are investing in personnel to support scheduling.*** Because distance learning poses logistical challenges in terms of the need to reduce contact points between groups, we are adding personnel costs for the creation of a schedule that safeguards students and teachers.

#### **Some Outstanding Questions**

- We do not know if we will be required to test or contact trace. If so, this will potentially represent an additional expense.
- We do not yet have guidance on requirements for dealing with a suspected case on campus, nor have we been given notification protocols for the community.
- We do not have rules for employees who are vulnerable.
- While we are currently relying on the strictest rules being discussed for our purchasing and personnel decisions, we still have no official guidance on these critical matters.

I recognize that this is a long email (there is even more I could have said) but I want to give you as much information as I can. Also, as always, please know I am available to talk to any of you who have additional questions or concerns. Our children's safety and wellbeing is our greatest concern, and we are sparing no expense or effort in our planning.

Be well,



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