



Dear Community Parents,

In years past, these final weeks of school have been a time for reflection and celebration. However, we understand this year is different, and that for many of us, our attention is not on the spring but rather on next fall. This is a time marked by so many “unknowns,” and while we still lack certainty about how COVID-19 will impact our community next year, the school is actively planning for all future contingencies.

We know that each of you chose Community School for your child because you believe this is the best elementary school for him or her. We share that belief, and feel that the value of Community School relative to other schools should not change because of this pandemic. In fact, the contrary is true: Community has the resources, facilities, grounds and personnel that make us uniquely positioned to continue to deliver the best elementary education in St. Louis.

That is why the Head of School and the Board of Trustees are committed to doing everything possible to ensure that Community School is the safest elementary school in St. Louis. We must put ourselves in a position so that, barring widespread school closures by the county, our children are at school as much as possible. This will require some significant changes to how we operate as well as meaningful investment in safety equipment. And while school may look different in the fall, we are still committed to the Ten Guiding Principles that serve as the

bedrock for our school. The entire world will need to operate differently for a while; but Community should still feel like Community.

We also understand that no matter what we do to insulate the school, there is a very real possibility that we may be forced into distance learning at some point during the school year. And when that happens, we should have the best distance learning experience in St. Louis.

Finally, the school is also aware of the impact this crisis has had on the bonds that tie our community together. We think of Community as a school for us all, not just children--that's why we refer to it as "our" school, whether we are parents, teachers, staff, or students. The friendships that we all have with one another are a vital part of the Community School experience, and we cannot lose sight of their value.

It is with all of this in mind that we reach out to you today to let you know that Community School will be ready for the challenge of next year. This will require creating multiple plans and contingencies for several potential realities in the fall, but as we enter the summer we want our families feeling confident that your Community School team will be hard at work planning for a successful 2020 school year.

Over the course of next week, you will receive three emails that will outline our plans and contingencies in the following areas:

Health and Safety

Our commitment is to making Community School the safest environment possible for your children. In order to accomplish this, new procedures will have to be implemented throughout the school. Guidelines and requirements for school openings are beginning to emerge, but we are not simply waiting for further guidance to act. We have assembled a task force of health experts, administrators and teachers to put together a plan for applying the best safety practices to our school. Details regarding this task force will follow next week.

This plan will require changes to many areas of the school, ranging from arrival and departure procedures, to the movement of children throughout the school, to ensuring sufficient personal protective equipment for all, to teaching and enforcing sanitary procedures such as hand washing

and social distancing, to creating conditions that will make contact tracing as easy as possible. We will also be asking for parental assistance in these efforts, helping families understand how best to support the school's efforts to continue.

Distance Learning

Our faculty did an incredible job this year of creating a distance learning program quickly and efficiently. Additionally, teachers and administrators worked to refine that program over the last two months based on parent feedback and their experience. The challenge now is to ensure that our distance learning program is the best elementary school distance learning program in the area.

For 2020-2021, the school has hired a full-time educational technology consultant to help teachers master the delivery of the curriculum. Additionally, teachers will use this summer to enhance their approach to distance teaching by incorporating those elements that make the Community School experience special: small groups, individualization, and an education rooted in the 10 Guiding Principles.

We also recognize that our parents and caregivers have been drafted as educators during this crisis, and that this was daunting for many of us. With that in mind, the school will be offering clear guidance and advice to parents about how to implement the learning program at home. Our goal is that you will not have to serve as teachers at home at any time next year, but if you must, we want to ensure you have the tools and understanding to succeed.

The “community” of Community

Perhaps the most difficult part of living through this pandemic has been the social isolation felt not only by our children, but by adults as well. This is particularly true of Community School, where we deeply value our connections to each other.

With this in mind, the school is committed to creating opportunities wherever possible to support reestablishing these relationships and building new ones. A team of parents, administrators, teachers, and the school counselor are in the early stages of developing strategies and events that allow the members of our community to engage meaningfully with one another while still

staying safe and healthy. We understand that an excellent curriculum is essential, but we also know the immense value of the friendships our children make.

We also want each of you to maintain a strong connection to the school. This requires open communication and the opportunity for parents to ask questions and get answers from the school. Feel free to reach out to us at any time with questions or suggestions:
rcooke@communityschool.com and barry@bodleygroup.com.

We look forward to outlining our vision for the 2020-2021 school year, and to updating you throughout the summer. While we all wish we could simply return to the same environment that existed this time last year, we must face the reality of next fall. And we also must acknowledge that we face ever evolving circumstances, and that all plans are subject to change in response to those circumstances. But the administration, teachers, and Board of Trustees are excited to meet the challenge of that new reality, and to ensure that Community School remains a loving place for children to grow and learn.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Barry Albrecht | President, Board of Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob". The letters are cursive and bold.

Bob Cooke | Head of School