



A Message from Head of School Ben Williams

Dear Cate Families,

Everywhere on the Mesa, there is evidence of progress.

Preparations Continue

For the last two weeks we have been preparing the site near '25 House for our augmented medical care facilities: two trailers with 10 individual rooms with their own bathrooms and air filtration systems and a separate trailer that will house our medical staff. They will be on campus and installed today. Our Health and Safety Committee, led by our COVID campus coordinator (and Assistant Head for Students) Pete Mack, met with the full faculty to discuss our updated plans to ensure the well-being of students, faculty, and staff and to share the addendums we have prepared for the Student and Parent Handbooks and the Faculty and Staff Handbooks.

He also presented our Social Contract, designed to fortify our commitment to community health, the opening of which references language from Cate's first Head Prefect, who graduated in the midst of the pandemic of 1918:

*"William Shepard Biddle's heartfelt description of Cate being 'a steadfast light in a troubled world' was a forceful statement about **the people**, not the place; about **the fellowship and human warmth** to be found here; about the kind of **generosity** that Cate inspires in us; about how **we're at our best when we're together**. And all of the precautions we've put in place for this coming year are designed to do just that: **keep us together**."*

Just this week, too, I learned from a family of two Cate graduates of their commitment to fund the augmentation of our Class of '81 Amphitheater with seating for 480, assuring that we have a place to gather the entire community outdoors in perpetuity. That work begins next week and will be completed by the end of September. Challenged as our preparations have been by an ever-changing landscape of health and safety concerns, governmental edicts, and pandemic impacts, we can see ever more clearly what the new school year will look like. And we like what we see.

Current Challenge

Our most significant impediment at this point is the state reliance on county data for clearance to open. Recently the California Public Health Director resigned in the wake of a necessary recalculation of rates of infection statewide. We are told we will not have the recalculated numbers until the end of next week at the earliest, which means any clarity on our trending locally is still a ways away.

Save the Date: Virtual Orientation

So we are focusing on the work we can control. You should have received this week information on student schedules for the coming year and on acquiring necessary textbooks. Shortly each new student will also receive an invitation to our virtual orientation. These will take place at **6 p.m. PDT on Tuesday, August 25, and Thursday, August 27**, and will be led by Cate faculty and senior Teaching Assistants. Our goal is simply to begin to forge the connections that will distinguish the journey ahead and to address any logistical questions that students might have. While this kind of relationship development is a bit more challenging in the virtual realm than it is in person, we believe in momentum building in moments like this. We take advantage of the opportunities we have before us. And the people at Cate are always an energizing force.

Reopening of School

With respect to opening intentions, we have a series of discussions planned over the next 10 days, including a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, after which we expect to establish a definitive date for in-person instruction and a schedule for populating the campus. I anticipate sharing that information in my next letter.

In the meantime, we trust you will enjoy the remaining weeks of the summer. Here is a picture of our Steering Committee retreat this week, which we held in Booth Commons. We are looking forward to having far more company in the new building in the coming weeks.



Servons,

Ben



www.cate.org

If you do not wish to receive these emails you may [unsubscribe here.](#)