

Dear Cate Families,

“Expect the unexpected,” may be the mantra of the day ... or the year.

On Friday, Governor Newsom reversed his plan to give discretion to local jurisdictions and announced statewide standards for the re-opening of California schools, public and private. Happily, Cate meets or exceeds all the standards for re-opening. Our goal throughout our planning and preparation is to ensure the health and safety of our community.

But Governor Newsom’s standards also require that Santa Barbara County (our local health jurisdiction) achieve a threshold for infection well below its current level. As we have noted in earlier communications, Carpinteria, Summerland, and Montecito have very low rates of infection. However, our opening of school opportunities depend upon significant reductions in infection rates in the county as a whole, and we must adjust some of our plans.

Most notably, we will begin classes on September 1, though we expect those classes to be held remotely. The County and State requirements and restrictions designed to protect community health, which have just gone into effect, will likely reduce transmission of COVID-19, perhaps dramatically. But, we do not expect that the County will be able to meet the Governor’s standards by the time we had planned to have our first students return to campus. Disappointing as this postponement is, we are incredibly proud of the online programming that the faculty-led Virtual Learning work group has prepared for this circumstance. We are more than ready to optimize the learning experience of our kids at home, so that they can hit the ground running when it is safe and prudent to gather together on campus.

We are currently looking at a return to campus schedule for late September. We realize that many families are already making plans for their children’s travel, and we are deeply sorry to be forcing adjustments. We intend to track the data on virus transmission very carefully over the next several weeks to be sure that we can schedule our opening on campus without fear of further disruption. We will be communicating regularly on this topic and will let all families know definitively a month prior to our planned return to campus. In all likelihood, that return will be sequenced in the same manner outlined in our [Return to Campus Plan](#), albeit with different dates.

In short order, the Governor will be sharing standards for the opening of colleges and universities, which in many respects are more relevant to Cate than the standards around K-12 schools. Once we have the information on those standards, which we fully expect we will meet based on our planning to date, we will have the opportunity to further structure our work and advocacy with the County and the Governor’s Office so that we can ensure a safe and timely on-campus opening.

As we have maintained throughout this pandemic, Cate is a lived experience. Mitigations to protect student health may require us to deliver our programming virtually for portions of the year, but our focus perpetually is on bringing the community to the Mesa. So we have no plans to offer remote

learning as a substitute for on-site instruction when it is feasible and safe to be on campus. And on campus is where we will all be in due course. We are quite confident of that truth.

Thank you for your patience as we work through this new challenge. At worst, it is a postponement of the moment we have all been anticipating. But arriving at Cate to begin school is surely worth waiting for. We will be back to you shortly with more information on how and when that will happen.

Until then, stay safe and well.

Servons,

Ben



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