

Dear Cate Families,

I celebrated this final week of July by strolling through the Kirby Quadrangle, Booth Commons, the Weigand Performing Arts Center, and the Ballard Recording Studio. Not only are the new facilities complete, but an emerald green lawn stretches in all directions from the various doorways; seats, tables, lounge chairs and couches await occupants; the performance spaces are all quiet, anticipating the energy to come. It was exhilarating to see these built environments but it was even more exciting to imagine them filled with those for whom they were built.

Opening of School Update

That day is not far off. We continue to work with the County of Santa Barbara to determine our options with respect to opening, and we are increasingly confident that the late September timeframe for returning to on-site learning is viable and achievable. The guidance we are receiving suggests that having students here in residence is possible even if the County numbers are not at the Governor's threshold. In such a circumstance, we would still have to deliver our academic programming virtually to meet the Governor's requirements (a strange thing to imagine with everyone on campus, I know) but we would be able to give students the residential and social experience they want and need. Any commitment we would make, of course, would involve both boarding and day students. You will hear from us weekly from this point forward, and we plan to hold to our commitment of providing all families a month's notice before we intend to have students back on campus.

Athletics

When our students are back, we expect to deliver an athletic program, albeit a very different one than we are used to. The California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) has moved the beginning of the statewide athletic calendar from August to December. In addition, at the state level, the decision has been made to consolidate the winter and spring seasons, while shifting the season of sport for certain activities. The CIF season assignments for this year include:

Fall (December - March).

- Cross Country
- Football
- Volleyball
- Water Polo

Spring (March - June).

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Lacrosse
- Soccer

- Swim
- Tennis
- Track

In response, all schools within our conference are evaluating their interscholastic offerings for the school year and will begin to develop revised schedules to accommodate these drastic changes. In the coming days, students will be asked to submit their Afterschool Activity Sign-Up forms. While these selections are not binding, they will help us develop a wide breadth of extracurricular offerings for students this year.

The fall season, now left vacant by the CIF, will be a time for students to pursue focused skill and strength training for particular sports and/or an opportunity to build familiarity with new and different forms of activity and exercise. We expect to expand significantly our outdoor options and to provide broad opportunities for interaction and engagement in non-academic pursuits. After several months for many with limited activity, some dedicated time outdoors building fitness would seem to be the healthiest way to start the year.

COVID-19 Testing

Our only significant challenge at this moment, despite all of the adjustments we are making, is access to and timely results from COVID testing. Our [Return to Campus Plan](#) is built on three tests in succession: one at home, one when students arrive at Cate, and a third a few days later. Such a structure relies on no longer than a 48-hour turnaround on testing. Yet when a group of administrators all got tested as a dry run study of our protocols, results came back after between five and seven days. We have purchased and will receive in the next few weeks our own rapid testing machine, so we will have mitigations in place to partially address the testing turnaround conundrum. I share the news only to provide context for our planning and to stress our focus on safety. Accessible, timely testing and turnaround is essential to safe operation of the school.

We have all become familiar with hurdles. We have been jumping over, side-stepping, or running right through a great many for much of 2020. The next few weeks will be no different. But there is a reason that we are doing this work, a future that we imagine and a hope that inspires it. That's just the motivation we need.

See you all shortly.

Servons,
Ben



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