

March 19, 2020



Dear DWS Community,

It is quite astonishing how fast things are moving as we keep up with the ever-changing pandemic and its effects on the world around us. As unsettling as all of this is, I am hopeful that each of you are healthy and enjoying family connections and creating social opportunities in new ways.

I have tremendous gratitude for each of you and for your ability to adapt to all that is being thrown your way. I know none of us could even imagine this current situation just a couple of short, fast weeks ago. I recognize that many of you are managing childcare and remote work challenges and changes. Thank you for connecting and sharing resources together!

### **Remote Learning Update**

The teachers and administrators at the school are working with the intention you each have come to expect. All are focused on supporting students with love and guidance in the coming days and weeks as we provide students with meaningful remote learning opportunities. I could not be more proud of the work and care being put forward at this time. I can guarantee none of us at DWS went into education with the expectation that we would have opportunities to engage heavily in technology. The learning curve is steep and all are stepping up! Please continue to be patient with us as we work out any kinks this first week and continue to build on the curriculum in the coming weeks as we ourselves learn.

The school portal system is how DWS will share lessons, expectations and links to class materials for our grades and high school students. Please begin to test and get familiar with the portal system if you aren't already. Teachers will populate the portal with lessons and needed links on Fridays, beginning tomorrow, with the expectations for the week ahead. Materials and links to video lessons may be updated throughout the week. It is now time for many of us as parents to embark on our part of this steep learning curve and, again, I am grateful to you all for your support.

### **School Closure, Field Trips and Events**

As many of you are aware, Governor Polis mandated that Colorado schools stay closed until at least April 17, 2020 and we are expecting this, and other community guidelines, to continue to change as officials gather information. This means the DWS return date is moved to April 20th. The school will continue to deliver our version of remote learning after we return from our spring break, and longer if needed.

The COVID-19 task force continues to meet and updates will be communicated regarding ongoing field trips, events and graduation as we monitor the fast pace of these pandemic challenges along with the changes they bring. With school not returning until at least April 20th, FANS of Spring will not be held, and any field trips we had planned during this time have been cancelled. Overnight field trips in the lower school are also cancelled for the remainder of the school year. We are saddened by these cancellations and the disruption to the students' experiences.

### **Community and Reflections**

In times of crisis, it is important to buck up, put on a stoic face and know that tasks must carry on and be accomplished. Our community has endured the continued changes with exceeding grace; understanding that this is what we are asked to endure. We know too that the whole world faces this crisis with us--we are not alone.

Even so, as a parent and as the School Director, I acknowledge the deep loss I feel that our children are not at school with teachers and friends. I have come to terms with the fact that important learning and growing opportunities that I have intentionally chosen are now put aside for new opportunities that feel far less certain. I watched as many of you came to the school on Tuesday to collect belongings, and I witnessed a strong, yet downtrodden community. My sense is that our community is perplexed, but willing to take on the challenges ahead. Upon leaving the school Tuesday evening-- without the children there, without you all there--I knew I was feeling one of the more sorrowful days I have encountered. In that moment, I recognized how much we all gain from the community, from our friendships and from this incredible education.

With these feelings in mind, a new goal is now set in motion. As we spend this time apart, and until we come together again to an open school building where we all can gather, let's each do what we can to keep our community intact. For the school leadership that means finding resources that allow families to stay a part of the school community, even during hard economic times, and for each individual's part it means remaining connected to each other. I charge us all to reach out to one another, to make new class connections, to bend our screen rules so we can see each other's faces, and to make space for levity and joy even when times are difficult. Let us cherish and nurture this DWS community.

With a focus on community, the school will continue to update our COVID-19 resource page. We are adding a direct contact to both mental health resources and a connection for those who have a community need at this time. We are also adding links to our social media for funnies and shared levity. Additionally, we invite each and every one of you to a community Zoom candle vigil Sunday, March 29th at 6:30 pm. We plan to host the candle vigil each Sunday evening – look for a Zoom invite soon. I look forward to seeing many of you!

With continued Love, Light and Health,  
Kelly Church



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