



From: **Nancy Mellon** <nmellon@riverschool.net>

Date: Fri, May 8, 2020 at 3:19 PM

Subject: Timing Update & Parent Survey #2

To: Nancy Mellon <nmellon@riverschool.net>

Dear River Parents,

As we've moved into a new month of Distance Learning at River, I know you are curious about the end-of-year school plans and, most importantly, want answers about what the fall will look like. We were happy to see those who joined us for the Virtual Coffee on May 1. Following is a summary of what we discussed and what I'm hearing from parents directly. My aim is to be succinct, as there is a lot to cover in this message. Of course, I am available to answer any questions you might have. You can find the link to our second Parent Survey at the end of the message. Please help us to improve and refine our Distance Learning Program by completing the survey.

Timing—This School Year

- River School's Distance Learning will continue through **May 29, 2020**.
- We will make the decision about the format, either on campus or virtually or some combination, for the remainder of our school year (June dates) once we have updated guidance from the DC Mayor's office. We will complete our school year, so that the faculty can meet their academic objectives for the children and we can hold our traditional, important end-of-year events, including Parent-Teacher Conferences and Falcon Graduation.

Timing—2020-2021 School Year

- River will start the **2020-2021 school year** in September and end in June, as scheduled. At present, we are planning for a physical campus opening in the fall, but we are also contingency planning for other distance-learning or hybrid scenarios. Our faculty and staff plan to return to school in mid-August for orientation, home visits, theme- and curriculum-planning, and professional development. Home visits will be either in person, if it is considered safe, or virtual.
- We are in the process of searching for a school nurse or service to monitor and implement effective protocols and best practices in health and safety when we reopen the school.
- In an on-campus, physically distant re-opening scenario, we think our model works in our favor. River's small class sizes make distancing at school easier to accomplish in a safe and responsible way.
- We will continue to work to improve and adapt our Distance Learning Plan, with feedback from parents and faculty, and with input from many educational resources, in order to deliver the best experience possible for our students.
- We continue to consider DC Mayor Muriel Bowser's guidance for public schools based on advice from our legal advisors and association leaders. Mayor Bowser has formed a ReOpen DC Advisory Group; we will closely follow directives from their Education and Childcare Committee.

Contract Binding Date/Tuition Refunds

- As for the **June 1 deadline for contract withdrawal**, here's why we need to keep to that date:
 - We need to know who wants to be at River so that we can retain the best faculty possible. We hire faculty based on enrollment on June 1 and then are contractually obligated to fulfill the contract terms.
 - We need to confirm our enrollment at each age-level so that we can optimally build our classes and teaching teams.
- We cannot offer tuition discounts if we have to move to Distance Learning at some point next year.
 - At River, 85% of tuition dollars are used for salaries and benefits.
 - We can't discount tuition because we don't discount salaries and benefits. Letters of agreement for faculty and staff are legally enforceable and not modifiable mid-year.
 - Your contract has included the Dewar's tuition refund insurance plan as an option for withdrawal and refund. You can contact [Chris Lopez](#) in the Business Office to go over those details.

Financial Support for Families

- Due to the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic on some of our families, The River School has established the **River Cares Fund** made possible by the generosity and support of the River community which will allow us to issue one-time grants toward tuition for the 2020-2021 school year.

As I've said before, I wish that we had a definitive date when the disruption to our lives will end. Until then, we will keep working diligently to be thoughtful, creative and measured in the delivery of our Distance Learning programming and school operations, while planning for an unknown future. Thank you for your continued trust and belief in River. I remain hopeful and fully committed to this wonderful community and will continue to communicate in a timely manner any new information as the situation evolves.

Please take a moment to fill out our second [Parent Survey](#). Thank you.

Stay well,

Nancy