



August 21, 2020: A Friday Update Before School Begins

Dear CDS Community,

Just as seeing campers on our yard brought incredible joy this summer, now with the adults on campus it feels almost like a typical start of school. There is a buzz of activity: moving furniture around, sorting orders, organizing boxes, and labeling items. There also is significant online energy, as teachers are learning together and teaching each other new tricks. Get ready to recognize a host of new Bitmoji friends! The administrative team and faculty are collaborating in new ways, reaching out to each other and providing space to process our current world and move forward in support of our students.

Please see [this new section](#) of our website for a centralized location of information and previous communications regarding health and safety protocols and our reopening plans. We will continue to add information to these pages, which you will also see as a link in the main menu on our home page called “Returning to School - Resources.”

At our opening meeting, I read the book *A Kids Book About Belonging* by Kevin Carroll. It is from a new series of books I discovered over the summer in which complex topics are unpacked in kid language. The topics are universal – feminism, racism, anxiety, and belonging, to name a few. The book sets the expectation that belonging is safety and that in order to belong in society one must first belong to oneself. Our challenge for the start of the year is to infuse a sense of belonging and opportunities to build self-belonging in as many ways as we can. This will be all of our work and will then let us focus on the four pillars that will drive our learning community this year: **1) Nurturing Health and Wellbeing; 2) Empowering Connection; 3) Amplifying Learning Experiences; and 4) Responsive Inquiry, Responsive Learning.**

We have a lot to accomplish together this year, and to that end we have reprioritized some of CDS’ internal work. It is my pleasure to announce two special temporary positions in our community.

Josephine Saunders will be serving as a teacher on special assignment tasked with

supporting our online learning and coaching our new teachers. Last year, Josephine served as a mentor to our associate teachers as a stipend role and we are fortunate to have her mentorship continue in this expanded way across our community.

Chris Teare, current Director of Extended Programs, has taken on an expanded role as our COVID Lead. He will be responsible for aligning our policies and procedures to current best practices.

I am deeply appreciative that there is in-house expertise that our community is able to tap as conditions evolve. You can read more about all of our inspiring team members in [the bios](#) on our website.

As we think about starting school in a situation that was already complex, the addition of the massive wildfires brings a reality check to my life. I feel grateful that our community is safe and that we are approaching the start of the year with a sense of belonging and connectedness.

I can't wait to see you at the gate if you are a preschool family returning to in-person school, and online in virtual classrooms and at our first assembly of the year next week.

Sending virtual hugs to all!

Warmly,
Shelly