



September 1, 2020: A Message from the CDS Board of Trustees

Dear CDS Community,

As this unusual and unpredictable school year gets under way, we wanted to share some updates with all of you.

Early in August, the [CDS Board of Trustees](#) convened a special meeting in which we unanimously endorsed the school's plan for a [phased approach](#) to in-person learning that puts the **health, safety, and well-being** of everyone in the community at the forefront.

Central to this plan are four guiding principles that will serve our approach to the 2020-2021 school year:

1. Prioritizing the **health and well-being** of all members of the CDS community -- faculty, students, families, and staff.
2. Empowering **connection** between learners, educators, and families.
3. Employing the [CDS Learning Beliefs](#) to **amplify learning experiences**, both online and in person.
4. Practicing **responsive inquiry and learning** as we rise to the challenge of fighting systemic racism and a global health crisis.

Consistent with these guiding principles, CDS is applying for a waiver from the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) to allow us the option for in-person learning in **Kindergarten through 4th grade and potentially some in-person opportunities for 5th and 6th grades**, even if the city remains on the [state COVID watchlist](#). This is a slow and evolving process and school leadership will continue to provide updates about our reopening plans to the community on a weekly basis.

Finally, the Board reaffirms our commitment to using an equity lens to support decision making as we proceed through the school year. Guided by our [diversity mission statement](#) and our [mission, beliefs, and values](#), we will consider both our entire school community and our neighbors and partners in the Mission District as we face decisions to re-open school.

Gratitude

Over the summer, the CDS administrative team worked tirelessly to prepare for the upcoming school year. During this time, they navigated the dynamics of the pandemic and the ensuing changes to state and local health guidelines. They synthesized feedback from students, families, and faculty about the online home learning experience last spring and incorporated it into an enhanced learning and technology plan for the fall. They prepared thoughtful and creative plans for returning to in-person learning that put the health and safety of students and teachers at the forefront. Through town hall sessions and weekly emails, they kept the community informed of their work and the evolving plans for the coming school year. They did all of this without the usual break they take in the summer, without the benefit of rest that they all need and deserve. **We owe this team of dedicated professionals a profound debt of gratitude and appreciation.**

Leadership

Finally, we'd like to end with some exciting news. Earlier this summer, Shelly Luke Wille agreed to a five-year contract extension as our Head of School. Shelly's steadfast, poised, and collaborative leadership style was evident well before the pandemic and these attributes have served our community in countless ways over the past few months. We are thrilled that Shelly has agreed to continue to guide CDS through this challenging time and towards a brighter future. We look forward to many more years of partnership.

Community matters at CDS. Let us continue to look out for each other and work cooperatively to raise our students into the adults we hope they will be. Let us continue to **share kindness and joy** with each other, even when our anxiety is high and our patience is running low. Now more than ever, we must lean on our beliefs and values to navigate these uncertain times together in pursuit of our collective mission to make CDS a place where **what you learn and who you become are equally important.**

With hope for a year of health and enlightenment,

Jeanette Perez (Luna '25 & Pax '29)

Co-Chair

Carl Schneebeck (Leo '22 & Silas '25)

Co-Chair