Dear Carrollton Community,

I hope this email finds you all safe and well, and that you have found some ways to enjoy time together during this challenging pandemic. As the opening of our 2020-21 academic year is a little over one month away, I write to update you on the progress and continued process of our planning for beginning the school year.

We have missed seeing your daughters on campus! For this reason, as well as educational efficacy, we continue to work on our goal to be able to welcome our students back to campus. We have hired an additional school nurse, handwash stations are in place, tents and shaded areas for learning outdoors are up, classroom desks have been arranged to create social distancing, and schedules have been modified to facilitate handwashing and outdoor breaks as well as to avoiding large groups and support small cohorts in our younger grades. We are also closely monitoring infection rate data, CDC and WHO guidelines, as well as continuing to consult with our Health and Safety Team. I include here a Facebook link to an interview conducted recently with Dr. Mestre, a Carrollton parent and member of our Health and Safety Team.

We understand the desire to have the certainty of knowing, now, the plan for re-opening. However, guided by the recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, which "strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school," and the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, which advocates that "school districts should prioritize reopening schools full time, especially for grades K-5," our academic team will continue to review both the situation and our plans with a goal of being flexible and adaptive to the situation as it continues to develop in the coming weeks. It is important to note, however, that there is no option guaranteed to be free of risk of infection. Consequently, there will be an option for remote learning under each scenario, and each family will have to make a personal choice.

As we move into August, and throughout the academic year, please pay close attention to emails from your daughter’s school head, as each division may have different protocols. In the meantime, please make sure to have read closely the Return to School Plan sent to you on June 30th. It outlines the expectations for all returning to campus. Let us remember Dr. Damour’s message that anxiety is not necessarily bad; it is a signal to act when something may be wrong. While many aspects of this pandemic are out of our control, we can control the measures we take to protect ourselves and others. They are: wear a mask, practice social distancing, and wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. Recently, the Director of the CDC stated that if everyone were to wear a mask and distance appropriately, we could drop the infection rate to almost nothing in four weeks. I urge us to be a community that strives for that goal by following the above behaviors both at school and outside of school.

Most importantly, please rest assured that your daughter’s well-being continues to be our top priority. We will all need to work together as one community in order to successfully overcome the challenges of this pandemic. In the words of St. Madeleine Sophie, “Whatever is best for the children must be done, however great the inconvenience.”

With courage and confidence,

Olen