

May 22, 2020

From the Headmaster



It was great to see so many students and parents on our School Wrap-up Day on Wednesday. It was a happy day in both the elementary school and the high school.

Thanks to all the families that have turned in **Tuition Worksheets for 2020-21**. I'm also grateful to the families who were able to make a payment – we are in good shape as we look toward the annual dinner on July 12. If you haven't turned in your worksheet, please do so by June 1, so Mrs. Barnes can get payments set up.

Summer Communications

This is my last regular communication of the school year. We will communicate during the summer as needed. I hope to announce new teachers for the 3rd and 8th grades soon.

I will be at school most days during the summer and am available anytime. If you would like to share with me your thoughts about our experience with remote learning, your suggestions for the new school year, or any other concerns, I'd be happy to talk with you.

We're going to make a change to **Supply Lists** for the coming school year. We haven't worked out the details yet, but our intention is that the school will buy most supplies directly, in bulk, to save families time and money. More information will be coming this summer.

Looking to the Future with Confidence

As we conclude the 2019-20 school year, I want to address questions about the year ahead. As I have said before, we are preparing for 2020-21 with the expectation – and I believe it is well founded, as I will explain – that the school year will begin on time and proceed as planned. I have heard nothing but supportive comments from parents, but I understand how families can have concerns about making a commitment to Lumen Christi with all of the uncertainty in the current environment. Let me address those concerns:

First, I have made it clear to anyone who asked that we will refund any tuition that has been paid in advance if students leave the school for any reason – so there is no financial risk to parents in enrolling. I also want to make sure parents know that if they encounter financial problems, we will provide the aid they need to keep their children at Lumen Christi. And I believe the school has to be ready to offer tuition relief if we must go to remote

learning for some period of time next year. I sincerely appreciate that no parents requested a refund this year, but that I do not assume the response will be the same if the school year is interrupted again.

At the same time, I have told teachers that it is our intention to pay them through the coming school year. Although we do not sign contracts, I will do whatever I can to make good on that promise, for the sake of our teachers and our school.

These promises to teachers and parents might seem contradictory, but they are intended to avert the No. 1 danger to all of us: a self-fulfilling prophecy where families are afraid the school will close – temporarily or permanently – and they will lose their tuition, or they're worried that their own situation will worsen and they won't be able to pay to keep their children here, so they pull out. In all these cases, what they fear becomes reality, for them and for our teachers and our school.

Still, it would be dishonest for me to make these promises if I didn't think there was a strong possibility I could follow through. I firmly believe we can successfully complete the next school year, and I think we must move forward with every intention of doing so. Worst case, I believe that Lumen Christi has benefactors who would help us get through a crisis if needed.

But I strongly believe that it won't come to that.

There are many signs that school will open, and stay open, in the fall. Unfortunately, every aspect of the coronavirus crisis has become so politicized that it's almost impossible to discuss these issues. But let me try to be as objective as possible. (I will cite several articles that will be linked on the Weekly Update, for further information.)

First, Indiana is working on guidelines for reopening schools. (1) The CDC has issued guidelines for school reopening that appear quite doable. (2) California, of all places, has announced that schools will open in the fall. IU, Purdue and Notre Dame have all said the same.

Second, many other countries have already opened schools, citing data that show very little risk of transmission to or from school children. (3) The study from Australia is particularly interesting – it is not a "model," but real-world experience. (4) The *Wall Street Journal* addressed this in its lead editorial Thursday. (5)

Third, to the extent that possible requirements have been discussed, they often involve reducing the number

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of students in a class or building – and while other schools may have to stagger openings or alternate school days, we should be all set! Add the fact that our school year starts later than most other Indiana schools, and we have a potential opportunity to offer a uniquely “normal” school schedule.

While there’s simply no way to predict whether we’ll face another spike in infections, if it happens our country is likely to be more prepared, and I just don't think it will be as easy to get people to accept restrictions a second time, and the officials know that.

So, while there is a lot of uncertainty, I think we have reason to proceed with resolve, and I need families' support. I love this school, and I know you do, too. We plan to open our doors on August 24, and I am grateful to all of our families whose children will bring this school alive again that day.

Have a great summer!