

September 1, 2020

Dear Webb Students and Families,

The start of a new school year is a miraculous time. There is nothing really like it. We all come together—students and families, faculty and staff—after a good summer break revived and hopeful about the adventure ahead. Whether you are beginning your 33<sup>rd</sup> year at Webb, as I am, or beginning your Webb years as a new student—you have trouble sleeping just thinking about it.

It is also true that each new year is new in a different way. I know it won't be lost on anyone that this truism is amplified as we begin this fall. And yet, as I think about what lies ahead for us, working together (and someday soon living together, I again find myself full of excitement. I know you are excited, too. Our faculty and staff have been marshaling our return for weeks.

Even as so much has changed in the world in the last six months, what hasn't changed as we start our school year here at Webb is a lot. We are here and ready. The faculty and staff are ready. And we begin. With a healthy dose of unbounded thinking and a deep sense of purpose, we've imagined an amazing year. Our [New Hybrid Educational Model for 2020-21](#) offers an extraordinary online academic and extracurricular experience as we begin the fall, while also providing the opportunity to transition to on-campus work as soon as it is possible. We have an opportunity to do our best and be our best. And for the opportunity at hand, I want to thank Dr. Theresa Smith and our faculty team, and our incredibly hardworking campus staff, led by Mrs. Janet Peddy. You've all been amazing.

To our students and families, I also want to say thank you. I thank you for your resilience and your optimism. I thank you for your commitment to your school and for taking these opportunities and making the most of them. Never has our dedication to our mission, values and culture been more important.

Though these last months have been challenging and difficult—we all know that better times lie ahead. We all know there is great progress being made on how to protect ourselves against COVID-19, how to treat the disease if someone becomes ill, and most importantly that there are multiple vaccines successfully entering late-stage medical trials. Bright and curious minds spanning the globe are tackling this crisis and working tirelessly to end it. To be optimistic at this juncture just seems like good common sense to me.

Also, as you all know, our New Hybrid Educational Model was built to meet the challenges of the year ahead. We will be online together and begin our important work for the year—and then transition to campus when it becomes possible. We have enlisted an incredibly qualified and talented **Medical Advisory Board** to advise us on the timing and manner of our return to campus—and with its guidance and in consultation with public health experts designed [New Health and Safety Protocols](#). Without a doubt, our plans for the year were built with unbounded thinking and an unwavering devotion to the good health, safety and wellbeing of everyone in this community.

In the midst of all of these preparations for the new school year, we have also been focused on our commitment to becoming a more welcoming, just and anti-racist learning community. As we announced in early August, partnering with our student-led Empowering Student Voices Initiative group, we launched a new resources page on our website and opened an online community forum for the discussion of these important issues. We have appointed Mr. John Choi as our first ever Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator. The senior administrative team, faculty and staff and student leadership participated in an intensive educational program led by diversity educator Rosetta Lee titled "Interrupting with Care and Facilitating Courageous Conversations." And our entire faculty completed Implicit Bias training with the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in preparation for our Opening Days. Again, there is much more work underway and we look forward to sharing an update in mid-September.

The year ahead will be a full one—full of **extraordinary and challenging classes, engaging afternoon activities, inspiring chapel talks, student leadership work, club meetings, advisory and time with faculty and friends.** This all begins online, but it is still going to be fantastic.

We will see each other, be present for each other, and together we will make this 99<sup>th</sup> year one of the greatest in our school's history. And we begin.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tf Stockdale". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Taylor Stockdale  
Head of Schools