



January 25, 2021

Dear Webb Students and Families,

We hope that this letter finds you well. We know that these last few weeks have been difficult for many. The high case numbers for COVID-19, especially in the Los Angeles area, and the political turmoil in Washington, D.C. have made January a challenging month. In the midst of all of it, our community continues to hold together, and we are so proud of our faculty and staff, our students, and our families for their ongoing commitment to each other. As we were reminded from Dr. Suniya Luthar's recent presentation, it is our relationships that most support our resiliency in challenging times.

We write today to update you on our plans as we near February break. There is a lot of important information here, so please take a moment to read this carefully.

The state of California released new guidance for schools on January 15. This guidance created increased restrictions for schools located in counties in the purple tier if they have an adjusted case rate above 25 cases per 100,000 population per day. As we write this, Los Angeles' adjusted case rate is at 75. Our county will need to be in the red tier before a broader reopening of schools is allowed. In addition, we have yet to receive approval from local public health officials to open our residential program. We continue to lobby representatives to have restrictions lifted and work directly with local public health officials to gain approval to open our boarding program when it is safe to do so in our area.

We have shared our latest plans with Los Angeles County Public Health officials and are hopeful they will support the reopening of our residential program once conditions improve. We have a series of health and safety protocols in place that respond to the most recent guidelines local and state officials have outlined in their reopening advisories for both K-12 schools and residential colleges and universities. These protocols include a daily health screening through our Passport app, expanded use of outdoor campus spaces, single occupancy dorm rooms, isolation facilities and quarantine plans, and more.

In addition, guided by our Medical Advisory Board and in collaboration with Dr. Prateek Jindal, Health Services Director for the Claremont Colleges, we have entered a new relationship with Abbott testing. We will be utilizing their BinaxNOW antigen testing to do twice weekly testing for surveillance. According to several medical studies, this level of surveillance testing, along with isolating symptomatic individuals, reduces infectiousness from a community by more than 90%. Along with continued masking, physical distancing, and our other health and safety protocols, we believe this layered approach will enable us to bring students back safely.

We are also buoyed by news of the vaccine. As many of you know, there are now two vaccines approved for use in the United States with very high efficacy rates in trial studies: Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. We are getting conflicting reports on when these will be available to teachers. According to the California Department of Public Health, vaccinations for school personnel will begin in California in February; however, Los Angeles Public Health officials are more conservative in their timeline due to supply. We do know Southern California is prepared to vaccinate in large numbers once the supply levels increase. We will continue to monitor recommendations for and the availability of vaccines for students and will update you when more information is available. Currently,

the Pfizer vaccination is recommended for ages 16 and up, though we expect more complete juvenile studies on both vaccines to be released this summer.

Based on current spread, the communications of state and local public health agencies, and our own Medical Advisory Board's analysis of the coming months, we have decided to focus on a gradual return to campus. Given the large number of our students who have indicated they will not be able to come to campus for a day-only program, **we will continue our academic program online** until we are able to open our boarding facilities. We feel this will enable our faculty to provide the highest quality educational experience to our students. In the meantime, we are eager to provide additional support to the large number of students who do live in close proximity and can travel to campus on a daily basis. As the anticipated schedule below demonstrates, our hope is to reopen residential facilities and resume in-person instruction after spring break. As always, our plans will be informed by local and state public health guidance.

Anticipated gradual return to campus:

- Starting in mid-February, we plan to resume our on-campus athletic conditioning.
- In March, we plan to open on-campus study groups. Organized by grade levels, these small groups of students will be able to come to campus between 8:30 AM and 3:00 PM (PT) on assigned days. They will have private spaces designated to take their online classes and shared outdoor spaces where they can socialize, eat lunch and study together. Our goal with this programming is to provide additional support for students, help them to connect to their peers in our community, and mitigate the social isolation that has been so difficult for teens during the pandemic. We will send specific information and sign-ups for these groups in early February.
- March 1 also begins our spring athletic and activity season. We will be reaching out with additional information about how we will incorporate these into our on-campus and online programming.
- We also intend to offer SAT and ACT testing for juniors on campus. The SAT is March 24 and the ACT is March 30. An email for sign-ups will be sent out to junior families next week.
- April 19 is our target for reopening for boarding and resuming in-person classes as possible within existing health orders.

Please note that in order to participate in any on-campus programming, students and their parents must sign our community health pledge and agree to follow all of our health and safety protocols. Keeping our community safe remains our top priority.

In closing, we are grateful to our families for their continued support as we work through the challenges of the pandemic.

Sincerely,

Taylor Stockdale
Head of Schools

Dr. Theresa Smith
Associate Head of Schools

P.S. We know that families will have many questions as we plan for the second half of the school year. **We will host a webinar to address your questions on Thursday 1/28 at 6:00 PM (PT), please check your email to RSVP.** We will have the following people on hand to help provide answers:

- Dr. Rahmi Mowjood, DO '90, Medical Advisory Board
- Taylor Stockdale, Head of Schools
- Dr. Theresa Smith, Associate Head of Schools
- Janet Peddy, Director of Finance, Planning & Operations

- Michael Hoe, Director of Studies
- Steve Wishek, Director of Athletics and Afternoon Activities.

The Webb Schools