

July 17, 2020

Dear Live Oak Charter Families and Friends:

I hope you and your family are remaining safe with everything we are going through.

Speaking of staying safe, in consideration of the COVID-19 situation in Sonoma County and the Governor's recent order, during last night's Special Board Meeting I recommended that Live Oak will start the year with 100% distance learning for the 20/21 school year. Although we had hoped to return to school in a hybrid model, with mask-wearing, social distancing and sanitation precautions, current health conditions in Sonoma County do not allow us to offer this option at this time.

Throughout the summer we engaged in much thought, consideration, and input on the topic of reopening in the fall. The common denominator among parents, teachers, staff and administration is we all have our health and safety as a top priority. Despite our preference to teach students under "normal" conditions and the prevailing anxious feelings about the start of the school year, our focus and top priority is the Health and Safety for all. Balancing the concerns, desires, wants and needs of each family, faculty and staff creates a common experience of unsettled feelings in the ever-changing nature of these times. We must be nimble and adaptive as a community, compromising and supporting one another.

One of the benefits of being an independent charter school is that we are small, albeit mighty, therefore the relationship between faculty, parents and students creates a strong connection in serving the needs of the school. Please keep in mind that our administration serves as both a district and local school staff which means we collaborate with our public Waldorf inspired sister schools, our chartering district, Petaluma City Schools (PCS), as well as SCOE, Sonoma County Office of Education, with sharing resources and guidance. Just prior to our Board meeting last evening, PCS also confirmed a 100% distance learning start plan for schools on a traditional calendar.

Another consideration for the opening of the 20/21 school year is the opinion and support of our faculty and their Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the school. We have a commitment from faculty CTA Union representatives that they are in support of full distance learning starting on August 17.

Distance learning in 2020-21 will be different from the online teaching and learning that happened during the spring, when everyone was trying to finish the school year under unexpected and emergency conditions. This school year, State guidelines require live

engagement with teachers and peers each day of our 180 day school year. Also, we have the ability to plan daily, create school-wide schedules and select online platforms. Students can expect daily online instruction from teachers, accountability, assessments, attendance, and evaluations. State guidelines, parent feedback and best practices shared among faculty will continue to shape how we will provide distance learning instruction.

As we begin the school year with distance learning we will continue to monitor health conditions using scientific research and data in order to assess when a safe return to campus within a hybrid model could happen. We expect to continue to serve families who need or choose to continue with distance learning as well.

**Volunteering:**

We have wonderful, smart and talented parents within our community. I want to give a warm heartfelt thank you to all of you who acknowledged your willingness to volunteer in some capacity next year, as well as those aware of their limitations. Our plan is to organize the volunteer duties and pair them up with skill sets that our volunteers have and are willing to share. If you want to share your specific skills and availability, please email [community@liveoakcharter.org](mailto:community@liveoakcharter.org). More information forthcoming.

**Town Hall #4 - July 21 at 4pm**

Our next Town Hall is scheduled for Tuesday, July 21 from 4pm to 5:30pm. I will review with you the process of this summer and our planning for the reopening. It will include a broad overview and summary of where we have been, the steps we have made to date, and the preparations for taking our next steps. There will be an opportunity for some live questions and comments as well as in the chat room. The meeting will be recorded and available afterwards.

**Office Changes:**

I want to wish the best of luck to Katie Louderback and her family as they are preparing for a move to Austin, TX within the month. Katie did an exceptional job serving in her role as Live Oak Secretary. She was positive, full of grace, great humor, caring and compassionate and so much, much more. We will miss you Katie!!

Best,  
Justin