



# Hello! A note from me to you.

MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF DENVER [An update from Julie Bragdon, Head of School](#)

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Dear Parents,

I hope this email finds you settling into a new, nice summer routine. I am writing to share some updates and plans for the fall and to also request your input into this design work. As I said at the Town Hall meeting on May 4, the safety, health, and best interests of our students, faculty, staff, and families will guide how and where we learn and operate. Our belief in our mission and our 55 years of experience and expertise will ensure the quality and high standards of our student learning experience, parent supports, and professional development of our faculty, staff, and parents so that we can continue to live and deliver on [our mission](#). The MSD mission, coupled with my firm belief in having students on campus as much as possible, means that we are working toward the goal of reopening campus as planned in August. It is important for us to

- be back together as a community;
- keep students, faculty, and staff safe; and
- optimize our well-designed and equipped Montessori classrooms and rich campus to deliver our curriculum.

I also acknowledge that it might be difficult to accomplish all three intentions equally and at the same time. The fall planning taskforces (classroom, operations, health policies and procedures, programming, personnel, and strategic financial planning) are designing for three scenarios:

A: Return to campus for all students with students staying in small- group cohorts

B: Hybrid return to campus with some students on campus and others distant learning

C: Short-term distance learning for all students due to closure

We have completed a health and safety reopening plan. As with all other planning, this document will be updated as new information comes out. I am happy to be able to share the current version here for your review: [Opening Plan Draft.pdf](#). Next is developing schedules that go with each scenario. As you can imagine, we cannot replicate our regular campus schedule because of regulations for health, hygiene, physical distancing, and stable cohorts. We will have a schedule for you next month and it will, by necessity, remain fluid.

Other important updates about the fall:

## **Classrooms & Students:**

- We are downsizing our classroom populations across all division levels in an effort to increase the chances of having all our students on campus full time. While we still do not know what the mandate will be for classroom sizes, we are planning for groups from 10–24 per cohort and ensuring that all classroom spaces have the square footage for distancing. The decision to downsize our classroom populations also means we have very limited space for new student enrollment this fall, and several programs are already at capacity.
- We are fortunate to have great ventilation in all our classrooms, most with direct access outside and all with windows that open. We also have great spaces all over campus for outdoor learning. Open windows and outdoor learning will be used, weather permitting, throughout the year.
- Montessori classrooms from Toddler – Upper Elementary are self-contained for learning, meaning students do not travel to math, language, science, etc. Staying in a single classroom to minimize shared space among students will be an important part of our cohort approach.
- The phase-in approach for all students in the fall will look different than it has in the past. I look forward to sharing details more about this redesign closer to the start of school. I anticipate welcoming families to campus in small groups to meet with teachers since we cannot have you on campus when we start school due to health protocols for now.

## **Limited campus access:**

- We have hired two full-time substitutes to cover classrooms as needed which will minimize the need to bring outside teaching support onto campus.
- Our facilities team will assume responsibility for campus cleaning operations so we can have better oversight and control as health and safety plans change, as well as to limit campus access by non-employees or students.
- As you will see in the Health and Safety Plan, we are suspending visitors during the school day and campus access will be highly limited – sadly for parents too.

I need your help in this next part of the process. Please fill out this short [survey](#) reflecting on your child's experience with distance learning, the ups and downs, and also on your comfort with a return to campus when allowed.

I plan to write to you all again the week of July 13 with updates to our planning work; rules and regulations are evolving so we will know a lot more than we do today. As an accredited school, we have been taking good advantage of NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools), NBOA (National Business Officers Association), and AMS (American Montessori Society) planning resources. I have

also formed a small workgroup with Heads of School from other Montessori schools our size. We are all learning and sharing a lot for each other – so Montessori! My goal is to have a firm re-opening plan by the end of July to share with you all.

I hope you all continue to be well. I will reiterate my gratitude for your patience as we adapt to this rapidly changing landscape. As I shared on [Virtual Campus](#), please consider adding “[Real American](#),” by Julie Lythcott-Haims to your summer reading list. Members of our faculty and staff are reading it as well and we look forward to some robust community book discussions. As always, please be in touch if you have any questions or concerns.

Be well,  
Julie

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