



The Taft School

May 29, 2020

To Current and Future Taft Parents:

I open with best wishes as we wrap up the current academic year and look to the next. Faculty are now in end of year meetings and writing class comments and advisor letters, and student dorm belongings are being picked up or shipped. We have been actively planning for the fall and will continue to do so all summer, and we are already looking forward to the start of the next academic year—a start we hope to be on campus.

And on that note, I write today to offer a plan for the communications you will receive this summer regarding the fall. Over the next three months, you should expect three communications about school reopening plans, one each month, each becoming increasingly detailed and specific as we have more real-time data and more answers to questions.

By the third week of June, you will receive a communication with two purposes:

First, we will explain the very basic outlines of what an on-campus return to school in September would entail, if conditions allow. Specifically, we will be able to give the actual calendar for the fall—in particular, when we will begin and end the semester—and also our expectations of families should a student be diagnosed COVID-19 positive or the school be forced to become remote.

Second, given that we will have completed our review of the spring term, we will articulate what remote learning would look like, should we have to be remote for the fall or any other time.

By the third week of July, you will receive a communication that announces our plan for opening school and what this plan will look like in its basic shape. For instance, if we are able to open on campus, we will explain the philosophy behind our community safety and health approach, the basic academic schedule, and our co-curricular program. If we are to be a remote campus, we will explain the basic schedule, expectations, and community engagement.

By the third week of August, you will receive a communication that offers details about what Taft will look like in September and how school will function. If we are to open on campus, we will be able to explain specifically how students will be welcomed back to campus in the opening days, what various community health measures we will be taking, and what the class day and afternoon program will look like. If we are to be a remote school, it will explain details around starting date, student expectations, and attendance requirements.

My hope is that this communication sequence will help everyone understand our approach to the academic year. To be clear, in this dynamic and unstable COVID world, our communication plan could change. The decision about opening school will be made with the belief that we must recognize and seek to meet two vital objectives: first, that community health and safety is paramount; and second, that a Taft education is critical and needed, for students, faculty, staff

and parents—and indeed for our future. Most important in our decision making will be any executive orders or guidelines set by the State of Connecticut. In addition, we will continue to work closely with and be guided by regional and national health experts and agencies, and our school physician, Dr. Diane Fountas.

I look back with real satisfaction on what the school community accomplished and became this spring. Every member of the Taft family should feel pride in the spirit that students, teachers, staff, parents, and alumni showed—even though we were tremendously challenged. We have hard work ahead of us in the next three months, but we are prepared to tackle it.

With wishes for a safe and healthy summer,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W.R. MacMullen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William R. MacMullen '78
Headmaster