

Dear Parents and Alumni,

Last week the Minnesota Department of Education released a [planning guide for schools](#) for the 2020-21 school year. RMS administration, staff and the board are working together to develop a comprehensive plan for a successful return to school this fall. Once our preparedness documents are finalized, they will be shared with families. We anticipate having this ready by the end of July.

There is no doubt, based on the state guidance, Rochester Montessori School is well positioned to reduce the spread of the virus and provide the caliber of education expected by our community. We are fortunate to have small class sizes, ample space within our facility and a beautiful outdoor environment where children may spread out and enjoy nature and their peers. As well, we do not rely on bus transportation and our children are already accustomed to reporting immediately to their classrooms upon arrival to school. We will develop a conservative model that maximizes the safety of our community and ensures the best possible chance for our children to remain onsite for the duration of the school year. The focus will be on children staying with their classroom cohorts throughout the day and limiting intermingling with other program levels and staff.

We have organized a Montessori Health Advisory Group to assist in best practices related to the health of our staff and students. The advisory group consists of Dr. Bharath Raj Varatharaj Palraj, Infectious Disease Mayo, Dr. Ala Dababneh, Infectious Disease Mayo, Dr. Chris Russi, Emergency Medicine Mayo, Dr. Misbah Baqir, Pulmonary ICU Mayo, Dr. Yu Kawai, Pediatrics, Mayo Clinic, Dr. Brenda Schlitz, Pediatrics, Mayo Clinic, and Dr. Carolyn Newman Naranjo formerly with the VA and an RMS Board Member. All members of the advisory group currently have children enrolled at RMS.

Our Children's House and Toddler's programs are licensed by the Department of Human Services under rules for child care centers. Consistent with DHS guidance, we do not anticipate any mandated closure regardless of what the Governor may mandate for public primary and secondary schools.

We are preparing to offer a distance learning option for elementary through middle school for the coming year and need to understand demand. **If you have a child enrolled in E1, E2 or middle school, please complete this brief survey no later than July 3rd:**

[Distance Learning 1st through 8th Grade Survey](#)

Additionally, it is of the utmost importance that we have a firm headcount for children who require before and/or after school care services for the 2020-21 year. Per guidelines, we expect to maintain consistent pods of children throughout the day which will impact how we offer these services. You should have received a message earlier today from SchoolCues related to

signing up for these services. **If your family requires before and/or after school services, please respond no later than July 3rd.**

Finally, if you are a returning family but have not committed to enrollment for the 2020-21 year, please understand that we will be setting schedules and staffing in the near future based on confirmed enrollment. For families that planned to transition to a new school this fall but are having second thoughts due to the pandemic, please know that the door is open and that we would welcome the opportunity for your child(ren) to continue their Montessori education with us.

We hope everyone is making the most of summer and spending time together as a family. The pandemic has created hurdles but we are prepared to adapt and return to our campus for the 2020-21 year to serve our community.

Sincerely,

Deborah Summerson, Interim Head of School  
Kellie Mueller, Board President

*“Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future.”* Maria Montessori