

CHEVERUS

May 9, 2021

Dear Cheverus Community,

[Click here for a video recording of the message below.](#)

“What will next year look like?” Besides the topics of Graduation and summer plans, the most frequent questions I’ve been hearing in recent weeks have been about next year.

- Will we still need to wear masks?
- Will students be required to be vaccinated?
- When will we resume our “normal” schedule?
- Will I still have the option to study remotely?

I’m not writing to you today with answers to these questions. What I’m hoping to do as we close out this remarkable school year is to put these questions in context and explain *how* we will answer them.

First, let’s flashback 12 months to May of 2020 and remember the questions we were asking a year ago:

- Will the virus die out over the summer so we can return to normal next year?
- If we do return to school, will students really be willing to wear masks all day?
- How will we manage to keep students 6 feet apart in classrooms?
- Can we have students studying remotely and in-person at the same time?

Remember how often we used the word “unprecedented” during those months? During that first phase of the pandemic, we all struggled to comprehend what was happening in our world and what it meant for our community moving forward.

At our faculty & staff meeting this week, I shared some thoughts from Dr. Emily Siegel, a child psychologist here in Portland. In a recent talk at my daughter’s school Dr. Siegel had insightfully captured the three phases of the pandemic and how we can support our children in this (hopefully!) final phase. In summary:

Phase 1: last spring and summer, we struggled to understand what was happening,

grieved the loss of events, connections, and routines we had taken for granted, and worried about what would happen next.

Phase 2: this past fall and winter, we adjusted to the “new normal” and learned how to live safely during pandemic times. Though we may not have enjoyed following all the protocols and restrictions, the rules seemed clear and certain.

Phase 3: this spring, we are once again in a period of uncertainty. Perhaps we even miss some of the security of phase 2, and we find ourselves unsure or even reluctant about returning to the way things were before the pandemic.

All of this is to say that the questions being asked about next year are understandable, an echo of the questions from last spring (phase 1), just in reverse. We are once again grasping to understand the rules, managing our anxiety about the future, and longing for stability.

As we did last summer, my administrative team will be working this summer on the answers to the “what will next year look like” questions. We will continue to look to the State, the CDC, the DOE and the MPA, and we will shape the guidance from these institutions into a plan that makes the most sense for Cheverus. As we did last summer we will also be seeking your input to hear your hopes and concerns about next year. This is how we crafted our “Return to Cheverus” plan last summer, and it has served us well.

I have stated publicly that I believe we are heading back towards the Cheverus we knew prior to March 13, 2020, undoubtedly forever changed due to the experience and understanding gained from the challenges of this pandemic. We cannot yet judge the speed with which we’ll get there, but we do know the direction in which we’re heading.

Our focus for the next five weeks will stay on safely and successfully completing this academic year, celebrating our seniors and the achievements of all of our students, and thanking our teachers, coaches and staff for the heroic work they have done this year. Finally and as always, we thank you for the trust you have placed in us to get this job done and the gift of working with your children every day.

Peace,

Dr. John Moran