

# THE HAMILTON SCHOOL

## AT WHEELER

August 2020

Dear Hamilton Parents:

Whether you are a returning family or a new family, I am pleased and proud to welcome you to Hamilton this fall. The Hamilton Community is extraordinary, and I am happy to report, it is alive and well. This year, we have approximately 64 students in grades one through eight. Currently, we have ten new students, 36 Lower School students, and 28 Middle School students. In addition, over the past six months, Jeanette Epstein and David Ahlborn have led an initiative to redesign The Hamilton Alumni Support Program. HASP was started twelve years ago to add support for Hamilton students going to Wheeler Upper School. The new program is called [Polaris](#) and will have Hamilton graduates and for the first time, students entering Wheeler from other schools. Very exciting!

Most people with learning differences learn how to become good problem solvers, in part, I think, because they have had a lot of practice in problem solving their own learning differences. Certainly, the current Coronavirus pandemic is the greatest societal health challenge in a lifetime. It will tax our problem solving skills, to be sure. I am confident that Hamilton students will rise to this challenge, and use their problem solving skills the same way they have with the learning challenges in their lives.

One of the challenges of this pandemic is the changing landscape. What seemed safe one week, seems less so the next week. I have two goals for our Hamilton Community. I want everyone to be safe, and I want the crucial learning, most especially in reading, writing, and math to continue. The Hamilton program will be different this year, most notably with regard to integration with the Wheeler Community as we try to reduce exposure risks.

Our plan is to open the year with live classes. The Hamilton Lower School students will be in the Whitaker Building. Hamilton sixth graders will be at the Farm with Wheeler sixth grade. Hamilton seventh and eighth will be in their usual Hope Building classrooms. Our overall plan is to create grade level pods that will have limited interaction with children from other grades or home rooms. Clearly, students will be spending more time in their home room classes, including lunchtimes, and possibly specials periods.

You can help your child get ready for school by establishing regular bedtime and wake up routines in August. I encourage you to discuss returning to school, and how it will be different with your child. Certainly, practicing social distance, wearing a mask, and regular hand washing during the month preceding the return will help children get used to the new normal. I am sure

that many of you have questions about the return school. In the coming weeks, you will be receiving information from Wheeler and from me as plans become clearer. For obvious reasons, we will not be hosting the annual Hamilton barbecue. New students will be invited to make an appointment to visit their classrooms on Tuesday, September 1st. The first day of school is Wednesday, September 2nd.

Clearly, 2020-21 will be more challenging than normal. To be successful this year, we must be flexible, communicate clearly and often, and we must pivot when necessary to ensure safety and academic progress.

Last spring worked as well as it did because of the teacher, parent, and student team that exists at Hamilton. Thank you for your support. It makes a world of difference.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a horizontal line that curves upwards and then back down to the right, ending in a small loop.

Jonathan Green, Hamilton Director