

Dear Purnell Community,

I am pleased to announce that Purnell will be open this fall. With the guidance of Governor Murphy of New Jersey, the CDC, and advice from other independent school organizations, we intend to resume in-person instruction with faculty and students on campus at the beginning of the fall semester.

As you know from our Purnell Connected Zoom meetings, we appointed a *Covid Response Task Force* in early March. I am pleased to also share that we have changed the name of this dedicated group of staff and trustees to the *Reopening Task Force*.

Purnell will offer a “Blended Learning” program combining in-person classes with a continuation of our robust remote learning and school life experience. We will continue to offer remote instruction during the fall semester for any students whose health and safety circumstances indicate that they should learn from home. All students will have the same instructional experience, and our proprietary *Learning and Wellness*® approach will operate seamlessly for our entire community. This hybrid instructional approach ensures equitable access to all academics and related supports, and many student life activities and clubs.

We have carefully studied the requirements and are in the process of preparations, and modifications required to open campus safely. We are focused on our academic instruction, student-centered supports for academics and social-emotional needs, and our health protocols. We are committed to maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for all students.

As you have heard me say, our goal is to continually strive to deliver the best mission-consistent, community-centered, data-driven full school experience possible.

The *Reopening Task Force* is focused on the following key areas of operations:

1. **Blended Learning:** We are taking the best of our spring experience and our professional development learning through Landmark College and synthesizing that knowledge with the latest research on learning, attention, memory, executive functioning, and empirically valid pedagogy. For example, we increased individual student support by both faculty and learning specialists, and we have designed multiple methods of curriculum engagement, student discussion, and means of assessment.

2. Health and Medical: We have prepared summer questionnaires for all families and staff to ensure a safe reopening. We also have new protocols for our in-person registration and daily operations. Head Nurse Chrissy Schmidt is leading this work in partnership with a pediatric medical advisor who is helping us and other schools to reopen safely. In the event that a day student becomes symptomatic, we will require that she stay home pending the results of a COVID-19 test. For a boarding student who shows COVID-19 symptoms, we have established a quarantine living space where she can stay comfortably and safely until a parent or guardian picks her up. The same policy for testing and quarantine will apply to all staff. It is our priority to keep our campus environment as safe as possible.

3. Facilities and Security: We are evaluating our shared spaces to provide, wherever possible, physical distancing in the dorms, classrooms, and at meals. We will not allow any outside visitors inside campus buildings. We are also addressing safe transportation for off-campus appointments. With the indispensable help of Vicky Browne and Jaclyn Shaw, we anticipate that each girl, including day students, will have a single dormitory room.

4. Student Life: With credit again to Ms. Browne and Ms. Shaw and other members of our staff, we will be ready to offer appropriate weekend activities, including some off-campus with vetting done far in advance. We are replanting the garden near Buildings & Grounds and raising chickens again, to provide the girls with more on-campus activities. This is a welcome return to Purnell's early history of hands-on, outdoor, experiential education.

5. Wellness: Our counseling team is anticipating and preparing for the transitions back to school life after this difficult time of upheaval and uncertainty. They are designing supports not only for students, but for faculty and staff as well. We will continue teletherapy for those students who remain off campus.

6. Communications: Beginning on July 1 at 7:00 PM, Purnell will restart the Connected Zoom meetings to share details of our preparation and to answer any and all questions that will likely arise. A schedule of these meetings will be forthcoming. Families will also receive a "Protocol Packet" with information about distancing rules, mask-wearing, sanitizing, and much more information that we know our girls and families will need, including medical and permission forms, and a link to our 2020-2021 Student and Family Handbook.

Calendar Modifications

We will have an earlier start date: Convocation and first day of classes will begin on Monday, August 31. This calendar adjustment requires our faculty and students to plan to arrive earlier than usual. We will finish our fall semester on November 20. This is a decision made to mitigate faculty, staff, and student exposure over the Thanksgiving Break. Labor Day and Columbus Day will be regular school days this fall (possibly with some fun activities). Final Assessments will be scheduled for the week of November 16.

We are evaluating remote opportunities for enrichment, activities, and counseling during the weeks of December when we would usually be on campus. There will be more information to follow on this topic. Please expect to receive a complete, revised academic calendar within the next 10 days.

It is important to note that while we are fully committed to resuming on-campus boarding and day student education, we also understand that public health conditions and the course of the pandemic may change at any time. Should conditions preclude on-campus operations, we will be prepared to continue the academic progress of our students, as well as activities, clubs, and counseling remotely.

At Purnell, we regard these challenging times as a rare and valuable opportunity to innovate: to reconceptualize what student-centered learning and growth can be at its best. I am so grateful to our team for their dedication and many, many hours spent doing just that. We have leveraged our expertise to prepare for an educational, engaging and growth-oriented student experience.

I look forward to seeing you on our next Purnell Connected Zoom on Wednesday, July 1 at 7:00 PM. In the meantime, should you have questions, please email them to reopening@purnell.org. We will answer your questions on the Zoom and provide a FAQ sheet in advance of the meeting. This document will be emailed and also posted on our website within the LMS system. We will also schedule dates and times for additional Zoom meetings as we approach the start of the school year.

Enjoy the summer, and please stay safe and healthy!

My very best,

Anne M. Glass, Ed.M.

Head of School