

May 21, 2020

Dear Wardlaw+Hartridge Families,

Wednesday was an excellent day at W+H. My morning opened with third grade speeches. I had Mrs. Heiss' class on my iPad and Mrs. Pedde's class on my laptop, so I could hear one student teach his class about Abraham Lincoln while another student spoke to his class about Jesse Owens. The speeches were every bit as compelling as in previous years. Immediately following those simultaneous classes, I tuned into 8th grade Capstone presentations, learning about human trafficking and also about the political rise of Evangelicalism since 1980 and its impact on reproductive rights. The quality of research, prose, and presentation were fantastic. In the afternoon, I saw the Zoom presentations of students from our two science research classes, and was soon over my head in the research findings about genetic expression in the Duckweed plant and also about the impact of genetic mutation in fruit flies and its potential implications for human disease. Though my grasp of the science research presentations was tenuous, I marveled at the accomplishments of all of these students across the three divisions of the school, and at the excellence of the teachers who guided them. I should give a special tip of the cap to senior Silvia Xia, who gave her presentation via Zoom at 4:20 a.m. from her home in Beijing.

The results from our recent parent survey speak to the outstanding job our teachers have done within distance learning. Conversations and emails from many of you echo that data in personal ways. We will keep working to improve our distance learning program, knowing we might need to rely on it to some extent in the next academic year. It is too early to know what next year will look like, but not too early to plan meticulously for multiple scenarios. As our planning proceeds into June and the summer and we achieve greater clarity, we will communicate our ideas and intentions comprehensively. Our goal, when we can do so in a way that ensures and protects the wellness of our students and employees, is to return in person. Days like yesterday just make me crave our return even more - it will be one fine day when we get there.

I hope you will enjoy this new video – <https://vimeo.com/421141211> – a sort of love letter to our homecoming.

Best regards,
Andy



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