

August 2022

Dear Lower School Families,

I hope you are enjoying a restful and rejuvenating summer. As we embark on the 2022-23 school year together, it is an honor to be writing to you in my second year as the Head of the Lower School at Wardlaw+Hartridge. I sincerely enjoyed getting to know our students last year and look forward to seeing how much they have grown in these summer months. Parents, I also appreciated connecting with many of you, and am grateful for the work we did together to support your children's learning within our mission. And as we welcome 30+ new families to the W+H Lower School community, I am excited to continue that collective work with all of you.

My summer has been consumed by our busy teenagers' lives: a four-day National Dance Competition for our sophomore daughter, and multiple College Admissions tours for our senior son. I have learned of the intense dance sub-culture here in America, and all the pride that goes into the wearing of a "Proud Dance Dad" T-shirt. Perhaps much in the same way that goes into the pride of wearing a "Proud Senior Dad" shirt? While I have not had a chance to sport either t-shirt...yet, I have been thinking about all that we as parents endure, to set our children up for success. Do we sacrifice much time and money to get our children to these practices, recitals, classes, and extra-curricular activities to challenge them to perform at their highest levels, or to merely go out and have some fun? I would argue that it is not one or the other, but a combination of the two.

Bottom line: regardless of how many platinum or gold medals my daughter, Julia received from the judges, I simply love watching the pride on her face when she masters and excels at a dance, while forming close relationships as she and her dance company friends support one another. Likewise, regardless of what College or University my son, Simon chooses, I want him to find the right school that will make him future ready, find a major that resonates with him, and enjoy the camaraderie of life-long friends. All in all, it has given me pause to appreciate the limited time we have with our soon-to-be adult children, and not take for granted the moments we get to spend together.

Two important announcements as we start the new school year:

**Class Assignments will be shared in Mid-August**

As we prepare for Parent Partnership Conferences on September 6 and 7, you will be receiving an email with your child's assigned teacher and a designated time for these conferences.

## Safety Measures

We ended the 2021-2022 school year with masks optional and suspended our surveillance testing and contact tracing programs. We maintained social distancing, especially in large gatherings. As we approach the opening of the 2022-2023 school year, we acknowledge there are concerns about COVID-19 variants and rising transmission rates in our area. We are closely following developments and will be updating our COVID protocols and reopening plan accordingly. That plan will be shared with families in August. Please do note that we are anticipating asking parents to wear masks for parent partnership conferences during opening week.

I leave you with a final thought of being present and enjoying summer and the natural world around us. As my wife and I take our morning walks on the beach, being present and embracing the sunrise, I often think of this poem by Wendell Berry.

In Joyful and Present Learning,



JohnEric Advento, M.Ed.  
Head of Lower School

