

October 9, 2020

Dear KWS Community Members,

The events of the last seven months have been a test of the strength of our community as we have faced and met challenges we could not have imagined. We have shown that the power of our community derives from our shared love of Kimberton Waldorf School and the support of its educational mission. Thank you for your tireless support as parents, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends.

In the coming weeks, there are a number of topics we will discuss with you as we move forward together including: 1) a frank assessment of our financial picture; 2) a transition in the Dean position; 3) actions the school is taking on social justice; and 4) a new committee working to reimagine KWS for this year and beyond. Today, we will focus on the school's current finances and an upcoming Dean transition.

Our Financial Situation: As you may recall, several years ago we introduced a new initiative to reduce tuition and increase enrollment over three years as part of the strategic plan. In the first two years, we performed better than planned and were able to grow our enrollment numbers. We were anticipating that 2020-21, the third year, would be a good year for the school, but the pandemic upended our original plans and significantly impacted enrollment. We had over 270 students enrolled last year, and we began this school year with approximately 180 students, resulting in a severe loss in tuition revenue and a corresponding unsustainable operating budget deficit. The Finance Committee and the Board have been meeting with increased frequency to explore all available options to both navigate the current crisis and set the school up for future success. A central part of these discussions is the need to preserve the unique value we deliver at Kimberton Waldorf School and the people who deliver that value.

As part of that evaluation, the Board in consultation with the Finance Committee, approved a revised budget on September 30 including the pursuit of selling two residential parcels which represent less than 3% of the land owned by the school. The sale of these residential parcels enables us to keep our community intact during this unprecedented time, continue delivering a high-quality Waldorf education, and project a balanced budget. At the same time, the Board and Finance Committee are working toward creating a sustainable financial model for KWS going forward in these unusual times and beyond.

Dean transition: Kevin Hughes, who has been Dean of School since 2012, began conversations last year with the Board about succession planning for his role, since he had been in the position for quite a few years, was in need of a change for himself, and wanted to create space for the next generation of leadership in the school. Kevin has shared that he sees this as a positive opportunity for the school, as change in leadership can be healthy for an institution and that new people in leadership positions bring new skills and talents. He sees this as an opportune time for a change, as the pandemic has created a situation where schools and many organizations have to re-imagine how they will carry out their mission in the future.

Kevin is not leaving immediately, and is working with the Board (which is responsible for hiring the Dean position) and the Governing Team on a transition plan, which will involve an interim plan and a longer term plan for filling the Dean position. We will be sharing more information in the coming weeks.

As we work to reimagine KWS, including sustainable financials and leadership, social justice, and a commitment to Waldorf education, our strength as a community is essential and deeply valued. Together, the power of this community has moved mountains to be open on campus and provide in-person education and at-home learning for our students. We could not have done this without everyone working together and we are humbled by and so grateful for each of you. **We are all in this together and we will get through this together.** Thank you.

Sincerely,
Board of Trustees and Governing Team