You can see this letter is long. But, I wanted to make sure I was thorough in explaining our process and plan for this coming school year. Please read through to the end. The first few sections layout our journey and rational while our plan is presented at the end.

**Background: What have we been up to?**

The last six months have been the most challenging for me spiritually, personally, professionally, and emotionally. I have experienced moments of considerable satisfaction in the way our staff quickly transitioned in the spring to distance learning and the memorable events they created to celebrate our students’ achievements at the end of the year. Conversely, I have been discouraged and frustrated trying to develop a plan to achieve the best solution for our students given the shifting requirements placed upon schools by our state government. I am sure as parents you too have experienced the same spectrum of emotions over this unprecedent time.

For over 40 years, it has been the mission of Damascus Christian School to provide an academic environment that seeks to have students follow Jesus and become like Him. Our mission has not changed. Achieving this in a traditional format however has become more challenging because of COVID-19. Through this pandemic, God has shown Himself as faithful and sustaining.

First, Damascus Community Church has pledged support in financially keeping our ministry viable during this difficult time.

Second, many of our school families have faithfully continued to support us by keeping their students at DCS and essentially keeping us open, so Christian education can continue to be an option for other families in our community.

Third, school leadership has spent a considerable amount of time researching options, seeking expertise, and crafting the plan for the fall of 2020-2021. We have desired to balance the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic with the academic, mental and spiritual needs of our school families. Our process for developing a plan has included weekly meetings with the following groups: our own COVID-19 task force, regional Christian school administrators, the Oregon Health Authority, the Oregon Department of Education, Clackamas County, the governor’s office, our attorneys, and several miscellaneous organizations.

**Our Rational**

The school board has careful deliberated about the upcoming school year. They confidently announce that a hybrid model of learning will be best in this situation. Their determination is based on the following five priorities.

1. **Serving the needs of our parents, students and staff**: The school board believes we can best achieve our purpose as an educational ministry of Damascus Community Church by meeting in person, so we can better address the myriad of academic, spiritual and emotional needs of our students.
2. **Safety of student, staff and community:** The safety of our staff and students guide our thinking. We have staff, students and family members who would be considered vulnerable to COVID-19. It is important to us that we take measures to ensure the safety of everyone associated with our school ministry.
3. **Operational and organizational integrity:** It is important for us to act with integrity. As stated in 2 Corinthians 8:21, “We are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man.” We do not believe it is ethical or Biblical to exploit or ignore the guidelines we have been required to follow.
4. **Submission to the authority God has placed over us:** In the board’s interpretation of Romans 12 and 13, we are instructed to submit to the authority that God has placed over us except when we are asked to do something in opposition to the Scriptures. The board does not feel we have been asked to do anything sinful or contrary to the Scriptures in the guidelines set by the government agencies, even though they may frustrate or disappoint us. In Titus 3:1-3 it states, “Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good,to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone. At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.”
5. **Long-term viability of our ministry:** Governmental agencies have made it abundantly clear that schools who violate the requirements for conducting school could face a variety of consequences including fines, facility shutdown, loss of accreditation or even personal liability in the case of lawsuits related to COVID-19. The board believes these risks could jeopardize the long-term viability of the school ministry.

At this point, DCS will not be reducing tuition because we will be providing daily, live, and in-person support and instruction along with distance learning. Very few schools are willing or even able to provide in-person sessions this year. If full distance learning becomes the sole means for instruction this year, the board may revisit a tuition reduction. However, we hope to pivot to full in-person, traditional education as soon as we legally and safely can do so.

It is also important to note that state requirements and policies are constantly changing. Christian schools like us are seeking every possible option to get our kids back in classrooms. Here’s what’s been going on behind the scenes.

1. Currently, a Federal judge will be hearing a lawsuit on August 20th concerning the requirements being placed on private schools in our state. The decision may impact what school looks like in the next couple weeks.
2. DCS is also pursuing Emergency Child Care certification, which would enable us to provide childcare from approximately 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Parents could confidently go off to work, knowing their kids are safe and continuing their hybrid learning education. Within this format, students would be given opportunities to meet with their classes via Zoom or in person. We will let you know if and when this occurs.
3. Last, Clackamas country’s metrics for schools re-opening are looking favorable. Students, ages pre-K through 3rd grade, could be allowed to meet for regular school (full day, face to face, and five days a week) sooner than we think!

**Our Plan**

The following points layout our plan for September. They specifically relate to starting off the school year and some of the requirements we must follow. As always, please check our [**COVID-19 webpage**](http://damascusor.apptegy.us/o/damascus-christian-school/page/covid-19-information-for-2020-2021-school-year) and our [**Operational Blue Print**](https://5il.co/jrjc) for additional information.

1. **DCS 101:** On a particular night during August 30th – September 3rd, your family will be invited to attend a special event called DCS 101. This is a short event where families of each cohort can build community with each other and staff. We would like to see each student and at least one parent. However, space is limited, so we will have to restrict attendance of siblings. The schedule is on the next page.
2. **“Back to Campus Camp”:** Students will come on campus for a two-hour session during Wednesday, September 9th through Friday, September 11th. They will specifically receive instruction on routines and procedures needed to be successful this fall.
3. **Official Start of School:** We plan to officially start classes on Monday, September 14th, with a hybrid-learning model, assuming nothing has changed from the governor’s office or the Oregon Health Authority. Currently, our plan allows students to attend school on campus in small cohorts for two hours a day. All other learning will be done through online distance learning.

Here are a few items to keep in mind.

* 1. We desire to meet with students everyday for a couple hours to provide in-person instruction to supplement our online instruction.
		1. Students and families will still have the option for full remote learning if they choose not to come to campus during these sessions.
		2. On campus, students and staff will follow the social distancing and mask guidelines for schools. We will provide mask breaks and limit room changes to try to maintain a sense of normalcy, since we really want our students to focus on being students!
	2. We will continue to adapt and move closer to traditional education as soon as we can safely and legally.

The tables below provide some detail of what a day would look like for our students.

**Feedback Request**

To help finalize logistics and organization, we would appreciate you completing this [**short survey**](https://forms.gle/WutSxtpx5wKS2vUw6).

We will also provide opportunities through Zoom for Q&A sessions for parents. These virtual open forums will allow parents to ask questions as well as hear more specifics.

* Elementary families: [**8 AM**](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71836128062?pwd=VGlwakx2YkMyZnBKdVdDOXo4b2pRUT09) and [**5 PM**](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73765692368?pwd=ektvTU9rMStneXphZmM2VXFBdW9FQT09) sessions on Monday, August 24th
* Secondary families: [**8 AM**](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75548060279?pwd=YmhlUGZLalh6RkJycUpqaklKVFVjQT09) and [**5 PM**](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77503012686?pwd=MGNiZGZwMUlkNEtZOWpJMDZTS0txQT09) sessions on Tuesday, August 25th.

**DCS 101 Schedule**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sunday, August 30th*** 5:00 PM – PreK
* 6:00 PM – Kindergarten
* 7:00 PM – 5th Grade
* 8:00 PM – 12th Grade
 | **Wednesday, September 2nd** * 6:00 PM – 2nd Grade
* 7:00 PM – 7th Grade
* 8:00 PM – 9th Grade
 |
| **Tuesday, Septembers 1st*** 5:00 PM – 1st Grade
* 6:00 PM – 4th Grade
* 7:00 PM – 8th Grade
* 8:00 PM – 11th Grade
 | **Thursday, September 3rd** * 6:00 PM – 3rd Grade
* 7:00 PM – 6th Grade
* 8:00 PM – 10th Grade
 |

**Elementary Hybrid-Learning Schedule**

On-campus limit of 10 students

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| AM Zoom Session 8:15 – 8:55 AM | Cleaning and Teacher Break | PM Zoom Session 12:00 – 12:40 PM |
| AM Onsite Session 9:30 – 11:30 PM | PM Onsite Session 1:15 – 3:15 PM |

**Secondary Distance Learning Schedule**

On-campus limit of 10 students

|  |
| --- |
| **Distance Learning Schedule** |
|  | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** |
| **9:00 –****9:50 AM** | Zoom class for 7th BibleZoom class for 9th LAZoom class for 10th History\*Zoom class for 11th Pre Cal. Zoom class for 12th Econ  | Zoom class for 7th SSZoom class for 8th Bible Zoom class for 9th BiologyZoom class for 10th Spanish IZoom class for 11th BibleZoom class for 12th LA | Zoom class for 7th BibleZoom class for 9th LAZoom class for 10th History\*Zoom class for 11th Pre Cal. Zoom class for 12th Econ  | Zoom class for 7th SSZoom class for 8th Bible Zoom class for 9th BiologyZoom class for 10th Spanish IZoom class for 11th BibleZoom class for 12th LA |
| **10:00 –****10:50 AM** | Zoom class for 7th LA Zoom class for 8th Science Zoom class for 9th GeometryZoom class for 10th LAZoom class for 11th Career Ed/GovernmentZoom class for 12th Bible | Zoom class for 8th LA Zoom class for 7th Science Zoom class for 9th US HistoryZoom class for 10th PhysicsZoom class for 11th Spanish II\*Zoom class for 12th Cal. or Philosophy | Zoom class for 7th LA Zoom class for 8th Science Zoom class for 9th GeometryZoom class for 10th LAZoom class for 11th Career Ed/GovernmentZoom class for 12th Econ  | Zoom class for 8th LA Zoom class for 7th Science Zoom class for 9th US HistoryZoom class for 10th PhysicsZoom class for 11th Spanish II\*Zoom class for 12th Cal. or Philosophy |
| **11:00 –****11:50 AM** | Zoom class for 7th Math, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1Zoom class for 9th BibleZoom class for 10th Algebra IIZoom class for 11th LAZoom class for 12th Contemporary Issues/Speech | Zoom class for 8th SSZoom class for 9th HealthZoom class for 10th BibleZoom class for 11th ChemistryZoom class for 12th Career Ed/Gov | Zoom class for 7th Math, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1Zoom class for 9th BibleZoom class for 10th Algebra IIZoom class for 11th LAZoom class for 12th Contemporary Issues/Speech | Zoom class for 8th SSZoom class for 9th HealthZoom class for 10th BibleZoom class for 11th ChemistryZoom class for 12th Career Ed/Gov |
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| --- |
| **On-Campus Learning Schedule** |
|  | **Monday -Thursday** | **Friday** |
| **1:00 –****3:00 PM** | Homeroom Discipleship Building class cultureTutoringInstructionAssessmentsLabs | Elective Sign Up (limit of 10 per class) |