

Dear Watershed Community,

A few thoughts about looking ahead to next year:

First: I just got back from touring the construction at our new campus on Spine Road (see a couple of photos at the bottom of the email and some earlier ones on tonight's social media post). Construction is moving so fast! I am excited to say that everything is on track for our opening in August. And while Watershed is more about the people, programs, and relationships than it is about the buildings, having a space that is purpose-built for our program will be a real gift for us all – students and staff. I can't wait for the fall!

Second: Yesterday, as part of our staff meetings, students from our Head's Council joined with staff to think about two things: how we can increase student agency (especially their involvement in the running of the school) and how we can ensure that we help students develop hope for the future. These topics are essential as we work to prepare students to take on challenges in the world. Without a sense of agency – the belief that you can make a difference – graduates are unlikely to help improve our world. Without real hope, our graduates will have a hard time addressing challenges. Watershed already does a lot to develop hope and student agency, but I was really energized by the additional ideas generated in this session. These will undoubtedly make our program stronger!

Third: In another part of our staff meetings this week we reflected on our mission and vision, thinking about how we can most fully live into these ideals. One of the things that drew me to Watershed six years ago was that our mission statement is both *inward-looking* (sparking adventure and wonder, fostering inquiry and community in our students) and *outward-looking* (preparing students to take on great challenges in the world). This is actually uncommon. Most school mission statements are only inward-looking – all about how a student will grow. This is, of course, important. But, I think it also leads to an increased focus on individualism in our society, when what we need is an increase in community, an increase in our commitment to the common good. That's why I like that we, at Watershed, also look outward – we name that there are real challenges in the world, and we believe that all of us can and should work to address them. We believe this will lead to not just a better world, but better lives for our graduates – lives of purpose and joy.

One more note about the future today. Our re-enrollment process begins on Tuesday, January 16th – you can expect a letter from Gray Carr about the process. We encourage you to respond soon; demand for a Watershed education is very high again this year. More and more families see the value of an education where students develop the skills, knowledge, hope, and agency needed to help build a better world. Enrollment agreements are due by January 31st so that we can respond in a timely way to new applicants and we can begin to build the contours of our community for next year.

This is an incredibly exciting time to be part of Watershed – with so much to look forward to. This will be a time of setting down roots at our new campus, a time of deepening our commitment to educating young

people to make a difference in the world, and a time of supporting young people as they grow toward lives of purpose and joy. Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Warmly,
Tim



