



MERION MERCY ACADEMY

August 2, 2019

Dear Merion Mercy Families,

Welcome to the 2019-20 school year. It's exciting to write you as the new Head of Merion Mercy Academy and send you this information to "officially" launch the new school year.

Since I began my new position in July, I've been on a listening campaign to gain insight into the many things that make Merion special. I've heard stories from faculty about transcendent moments in their classrooms and from past parents who have recounted how a Merion education opened doors for their daughters. Alumnae have also told me about life-long friendships with classmates, and current parents have shared their dreams for their girls.

I hope that you will continue to tell me your own stories throughout the coming year. We will host several community events at school this fall, so please plan on attending one or more of our gatherings. I'm interested in learning why you chose to give your daughters the gift of a Merion education, and I want to learn about your experiences. The Mercy charism gives Merion a tradition of both strength and compassion and a willingness to fearlessly embrace the future. It is my hope that we can build this future together to take Merion into its next era.

While many of our community members have been enjoying family time this summer, our campus has been busy with activity. We hosted another successful Merion Mercy summer program, with 262 registered students participating in enrichment programs, sports camps and for-credit high school classes. Thanks to a successful Sip'n Bid auction, seven classrooms have been reimaged as student-centered classrooms, complete with state-of-the-art furniture that facilitates student collaboration and connection. Workspaces such as these are essential to preparing our girls for college and beyond.

Although our faculty have not yet returned to school, they have engaged in life-long learning opportunities to bring the best resources to your daughters. Some of our faculty completed advanced degrees, while others began new programs. Several faculty members worked on book-writing and CD projects that will be released soon. Others participated in workshops and institutes offered by the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History, the College Board, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Longwood Gardens to explore diverse topics such as artificial intelligence, equity-centered leadership, STEM education, genocide and leadership for Mercy lay educators. The list of faculty professional development is so impressive that I've included it in this mailing.

We will welcome back several individuals in new roles, and I'm also happy to introduce you to several new members of our faculty and staff. I have included their biographies in this missive, and I know you'll welcome them warmly into the Merion Community and will enjoy getting to know them as I have.

Finally, we have made a few updates to our safety protocols this year. The safety of your daughters is paramount, and we routinely evaluate all of our procedures to keep up with best practices. To that end, we will now have only one entrance for visitors at the front of the building and have developed a new visitor sign-in policy. We will also roll out a key-swipe entry system for students. Please look for information about these new procedures in a separate communication once school begins. I ask for your support with these changes as these policies aim to keep your daughters safe at all times.

I hope you enjoy these last few weeks of summer. I will be busy helping my daughter Lucy get ready for her first year of college as well as enjoying time with my son Will, a rising high school junior, and my husband Tony. I'm looking forward to introducing you to my family at Merion Mercy events this fall.

Thank you again for your partnership and trust as we begin a new school year together.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura".

Laura Farrell
Head of School