



Providing a place where children love to learn, educating children for all aspects of life, and fostering capacities within to become successful, self-assured adults who contribute to a better world.

December 2019

Dear Parents,

After a thorough review of many factors, the Board of Trustees has decided to increase tuition by 1.5% for the upcoming year. Program/Supply Fees remain at their current levels.

The enrollment process was carefully reviewed and the due date moved out by a month to allow parents more time to complete the process. Additionally, the following changes were made in part to help limit the tuition increase to 1.5%:

- The registration fee is non-refundable with no option to apply it to the last month of the 2020-21 tuition payments.
- The registration due date has been made later and a monthly late fee has been added.
- A change fee has been added for each time a signed-contract is modified.

Please carefully review the Tuition & Fees Schedule for 2020-21 and the Enrollment Timeline for details on all of the changes. Timely enrollment allows for thoughtful curricular, financial, and strategic planning for the upcoming school year. As always, payment plans begin in July in order to purchase classroom supplies and to pay the teacher and staff salaries in the summer as they prepare for the upcoming school year.

Changes in the Names and Options of our Early Childhood Program

As we begin to plan for the 2020-21 school year, we will be implementing recommendations and suggestions received from the AWSNA and NYSAIS accreditation teams, as well as those from Your People, a marketing organization we have been working with this year. One such change you may notice is a renaming of our Early Childhood classes. Please note that our Early Childhood program will continue to remain the same. This is simply a change in nomenclature to allow for greater accessibility and understanding of our programs by prospective families and the wider community. Our Nursery program will now be known as a 3-day Pre K program. Our mixed-age Kindergarten program will now be referred to as a combined 5-day Pre K and Kindergarten program.

Early Childhood parents will additionally notice a change in afternoon program options for 2020-21. To create more consistency for the students and maintain staffing levels, parents now choose the appropriate Morning Program (8:00 am - 12:15 pm) and then have the option of choosing an Afternoon Add-On Program (12:15 am - 2:50 pm) of either 2-day Lunch Bunch on Tuesdays and Wednesdays or 4-day Lunch Bunch on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. On Thursdays, all students in Pre K - 5th Grade will be dismissed at 12:15 pm, half-day dismissal time, while students in Grades 6-8 will continue to have team sports until 2:50 pm. There will be a separate age-appropriate Aftercare class available to Pre K & Kindergarten students, staffed by Lunch Bunch teachers on Thursdays until 2:50 pm. The reason Thursdays are half-days - for a majority of the students - is to allow faculty members to attend the Faculty Meetings held on Thursday afternoons, as well as to complete committee work necessary to run a successful Waldorf School.

Our Challenges and Strengths

At the beginning of June 2019, we were looking at an increase in enrollment for the first time since 2009 as

well as a balanced budget with built-in reserves. Unfortunately, events beyond our control during the Summer of 2019 resulted in a drop in enrollment and a related budget deficit.

We fully believe that the changes we began implementing last year and have continued this year will see us through the current situation and we will make steady progress towards our goal of increased enrollment and financial sustainability. These actions were reflected in the many strengths of our school as identified by the AWSNA Accreditation Team when they visited two months ago:

- Clarity of mission and purpose, advanced by an engaged teaching faculty and a leadership team that is deeply committed to the principles on which the school was founded.
- A true sense of collegiality and respect amongst teachers, administrative staff and board members.
- A comprehensive and integrated program that is effectively implemented by dedicated teachers.
- The seven AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools are exemplified in all areas of the school.
- The steady hand by which board members and the school administrator have navigated the enrollment and financial crises stemming from the abrupt change to vaccination laws.
- A kitchen that serves up nutritional student and faculty/staff lunches, take-home dinners, snacks for purchase, and provides meals for events such as the pentathlon [Grade 5 Olympics], all of which provide additional income to the school.
- Expansive facilities and well-tended grounds that are designed with healthy child development in mind.
- A robust movement/eurythmy/sports program that supports physical, social, emotional, and academic development.
- An educational support program with well-trained and experienced staff who effectively coordinate their work with the school district.
- The creation of a new messaging platform that will aid the school in the establishment of improved marketing materials.

Upcoming Community Event

Learn more about what makes Aurora Waldorf School great and join other parents, faculty, staff, trustees, and AWS friends on **Saturday, January 11, 2020, for a Pre K and K Experience, Journey through the Grades, and Alumni Panel**. Parents at the November Community Meeting were impressed by the Grade 8 presentation and asked how to learn more about the educational process through the grades. The January 11 event will provide this opportunity. The alumni panel will discuss how it translates to success in high school, college and in the modern workforce. Invite friends to join you and learn more about our wonderful school. Your presence and energy at this event will help prospective families to picture themselves at AWS, and does so much to support our efforts to increase enrollment. Childcare is available for those who register in advance.

Our school could not sustain and grow without the commitment of our students' families. We thank you for that.

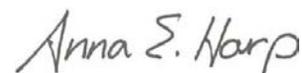
In Gratitude,



Brooke McAdam
Board of Trustees, President



Jim Anderson
Board of Trustees, Treasurer



Anna Harp
Administrator