



Friday, May 1

Dear Friends,

For the NGFS community, this time of year is usually marked by the comings and goings of buses full of students and staff headed for adventure, spring sports, musicals, outside classes, and even baby chicks. These beautiful, breezy spring days arrived, even amid the anxiety and tumult of COVID-19, just as they always do. And because it is Friday, our students attended Meeting for Worship this morning; that's what happens each week at NGFS; our students and staff depend on this time to quiet their minds and feel the warmth of community around them. This morning some of our youngest friends shared the things, people, or places that make them feel peaceful, and our older students reflected upon the interconnectedness of all living things. These are not "normal" times, but as educators, we know that routine, even during a crisis, can settle the ground beneath one's feet. Our commitment to students can be seen in many ways, but providing regular time and attention to help them learn to quiet the noise around them, even for a short time, is a precious gift that all NGFS students receive.

This week, as teachers, learning specialists, and division heads continued to refine and evolve remote learning, a dedicated group of administrators and trustees began the critical work of looking strategically into the fall of 2020 and beyond. Although we are planning to open as scheduled in August, the health and safety of our community will always come first. This fundamental priority demands that we look carefully and critically at the 20-21 academic year and plan for the different scenarios that public health experts are concerned about for the coming year. Keeping our distinctive approach to teaching and learning at the center of our lens, our goal is to identify and implement necessary modifications to our campus environments, daily operations, and personal practices to ensure the health and safety of NGFS students, staff, and families. Today's challenges are affecting each of us differently, and all members of our community may not be able to enjoy more freedom as we move into **the phases Governor Cooper has identified.**

Meeting the health, safety, educational, social, and emotional needs of our students in different learning scenarios may be challenging. The unique mission of New Garden Friends School has guided us for five decades, and it will continue to illuminate and drive our dedication and commitment to inclusivity and innovation, even now. If any community of students, staff, families, trustees, and friends is up for this task, we are!

Let us continue to hold all affected by these challenging times in the Light,

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