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November 18, 2020

Dear ASW Community,

Fall greetings from the ASW Board of Trustees! This school year has been a unique and challenging experience for everyone in our community, as well as the city and country we serve. As we approach the beginnings of the holiday season, I would like to express the Board's sincere and deep gratitude to the whole community—parents, teachers, staff and students—for the extraordinary collaboration and dedication that has brought us this far. It has truly been a collective effort.

In the spring of 2020, as the pandemic engulfed country after country, ASW conducted 12 weeks of virtual school, bringing our seniors to graduation and finding some appropriate events to take the edge off of the many activities and traditions that had to be sacrificed for our collective safety. Our teachers did a magnificent job of providing high quality virtual school at all grade levels, though we learned a number of lessons along the way. One key lesson is that virtual school is not an equal replacement for classroom learning. We also learned that virtual school for our youngest learners is the most challenging and impactful on the parents in our community. Our core values are clear about the value of learning as an engaged community: much of our students' learning and inspiration comes from personal interactions between and among teachers and students.

Out of these lessons, the Board committed to providing resources and guidance to the Administration to provide a comprehensive, multi-layered health safety program to conduct school in the classroom for this year, to the greatest extent possible. That we have reached this point in the year with limited periods of selected virtual school is a testament to the thought and dedication that went into implementing these health safety protocols, and to your collaboration and support in making them effective.

The Board is fully aware that we may need periods of virtual school this year. There are three criteria that the Board is closely monitoring to determine when it would be appropriate to move into and back out of virtual school. First and foremost, we are focused on the health of students, teachers and staff within the school and preventing internal spread of COVID-19. Any situation of suspected internal spread will trigger cohort-based periods of virtual school. Second, we live and work within the context of Poland, and any period of national quarantine would necessarily result in ASW moving to virtual mode. Third, ASW values the relationship through the U.S. Embassy with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Education and Health. Formal communication was sent via the embassy explaining the health safety program and ASW's intent to remain in school while our measures of health safety indicate it remains viable. ASW's collaboration with Sanepid has been regular and

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bi-directional, and as of this point, ASW has received supportive feedback on our protocols and methodology. However, ASW remains open and ready to respond should that feedback change. As a Board, our highest priority during this crisis is to provide the best learning experience for our students by maximizing the periods of time we conduct school in the classroom while maintaining the health safety of our students, teachers and staff.

The focus on community-wide health safety has dominated our agenda this fall, however it has not precluded the Board's focus on other strategic priorities for this year. The Board begins each school year with a Fall Retreat, during which tangible and measurable goals are set for the year ahead. The Board Committees, which include a number of participants from the ASW community, remain focused on this year's goals, listed below:

1. To secure proper resourcing, policy support & control to enable administration to maintain successful response to COVID risk management as measured by student, faculty and staff health, parent satisfaction, and retained financial results.
2. To engage as stakeholders in strategic planning to inform long-term vision, strategic projects, and facility master planning.
3. To provide policy guidance and active support for institutionalizing ASW's Culture of Giving as a stewardship, marketing, and outreach strategy with immediate and mid-term impacts both internally and externally.

The Board welcomes interest from community members in helping us achieve these goals. Please don't hesitate to reach out to any of our board members for further information and opportunities to connect with these efforts.

In closing, we as the Board would like to recognize that our community has not remained unscathed through this pandemic. Members of our community directly affected by cases of COVID-19 need our continuing emotional and social support. Most of our community has been forced to cancel plans and traditions and continues to struggle with the uncertainties related to balancing our plans with our health safety. Nevertheless, our community continues to battle this pandemic with passion and creativity. I would like to particularly recognize the work of the PTO in creating many opportunities for community building, and our teachers and activities coordinators for keeping traditions like sports and drama alive and well this fall! Our strength lies in our coming together as a supportive community, and embodying a Culture of Giving through our actions and words. We are truly all in this together, and without us all it would not be possible.



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On behalf of the ASW Board of Trustees, I would like to thank each and every one of you for the part you've played in our community. As the holidays near, starting with the UN celebration and U.S. Thanksgiving day, may we continue to be thankful for the diverse and supportive community we share, and may your holidays be times of meaningful celebration with family and friends.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Liddle".

Gregory W. Liddle
Chair, Board of Trustees
American School of Warsaw