



August 6, 2022

Dear parents & guardians,

Welcome back to Harmony! Our staff have been hard at work over the past several weeks planning what promises to be a year of restoration and renewal after 2 years of hardship. The improvements and cohesive integration of our physical campus are the outward expression of the internal systems development our faculty have been engaged in since 2020. Our curriculum has matured, our student supports are well honed, and our collaboration as a faculty is vibrant and innovative. We look forward to a year of advanced student scholarship and achievement, an engaging schedule of rejuvenated community events, and a deepening commitment to the well-being and personal health of our students, families, and staff.

As the above introduction indicates, there is MUCH that is in store for the new year. This letter intends to acquaint you with some of the major projects and happenings that are underway, as well as to prepare you for the logistics of the new school:

Important Dates & Calendar of Events including:

- August 12 – Enrollment Packets sent to families, Due back by August 16th
- August 17 – Wednesday – First Grade Sunflower Induction Ceremony
- August 22-26 – Back to School Parent Class Meetings & Community Welcome Dinner

Facilities Improvements Update including:

- August 13 – Saturday – Community Planting Party

Faculty/Staff Changes & Hiring Opportunities

COVID protocols for 2022-2023 including:

- August 12 – Friday – Home Rapid Test Pickup
- Campus Accessibility, Masks, Testing, & Field Trips

Parking, Drop Off and Pickup

Special Projects for 2022-2023 including:

- NEW No Cost After School Program for 2022-2023 (3:05pm-5:00pm)
- Summer School 2023
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Development
- Coherence and Identity of Harmony/Salmon Creek

School Board & Administration Updates including:

- Open Board Position
- New Communication tools, New Student Information System, & Budget Update

The pages that follow cover the updates listed above. To assist in communicating the many elements of this letter we are hosting a **Back-to-School Parent Orientation** teleconference on **Thursday, August 11th at 6:00pm**. Please use the following link to join us- <https://tinyurl.com/24eva8nb> A recording of the orientation will be posted following the event if you can't join us in real time. Please send us any questions you may develop as you read through our updates or look ahead to the school year for your child(ren).

We look forward to seeing you on the first day of school, Wednesday August 17th at 8:30am!

Sincerely,

Matthew Morgan
Superintendent – Principal



■ Important Dates & Calendar of Events

Subscribe to the HUSD Calendar Online!
www.harmonyusd.org/calendar

August 12 –Friday 9am-4pm – Home Rapid Test Pickup & Harmony

The Sonoma County Office of Education has distributed home test kits to county schools for pickup by families in anticipation of the return to school. Every family may pick up 2 tests per student. This effort is to ensure any positive cases can quarantine prior to the return of school to protect student and staff attendance. Please rapid test your child the day before or morning of the first day of school and send a photo of the test result to our school nurse at testresult@harmonyusd.org

Pickup your test at the school office starting at 9am on Friday August 12th. Tests will also be available for pickup Monday and Tuesday August 15 and 16. Please sign in on the pickup sheet and take your tests. In the future, if you need additional home tests for your child or family, please contact the school; we are working to ensure our families have rapid tests available when needed.

August 13– Saturday 9am-12pm – Community Planting Party

Join us at 9:00 AM at the flag circle for a tour of facilities improvements and a look ahead to the field and water system completion. Following the tour at 9:30, we will meet in the new unity courtyard to plant trees and other ornamentals in the remodeled center of our campus. Bring your work gloves and garden tools to help beautify the campus for our kids. Children are welcome but childcare is not provided.

August 17 – Wednesday – First Grade Sunflower Induction Ceremony

Last June 3rd, our school came together to celebrate the graduation of our outgoing 8th grade class. As many of our children do not have the opportunity to attend the formal graduation ceremony in the evening, we hold a community event in the morning of the last day of school to help our younger students develop an understanding for the momentous completion of K-8 scholarship at Harmony, to build a tradition of recognizing scholastic achievement, and honor the relationships that our students have developed with the 8th graders. In the same way, we will be starting the school year with a complimentary counterpoint as we welcome the rising 1st grade class into the grades program. As with the 8th grade farewell ceremony, our 8th graders will be partnered with their 1st grade buddies, delivering a flower of courage and support for the 1st graders as they prepare for their new journey. This event is open to the community. Please sign in at the front office before 10:30 am and make your way to the back meadow to watch the event. Thank you to Krista Gasper, our garden coordinator and ARK parents for the flowers.

August 22-26 –Back to School Parent Class Meetings & Community Welcome Dinner

We will be hosting our back to school class meetings the 2nd week of school. Each meeting is 1 hour according to the schedule below. These orientation meetings are vital for you to meet your child's teacher and learn about how the class will flow during the year. A class parent will be asked to volunteer to help support communication and coordination for special events and field trips throughout the year. If you can help, please notify your teacher. Childcare IS provided. Please check your child in at the library prior to the meeting.

At the end of the week all families, schoolwide, are invited to attend our Community Welcome Dinner in the cafeteria. This event is a fundraiser for our parent support organization ARK, and a great opportunity to meet other families in staff celebrating the start of the new school year!

August 22, Monday	TK & K: 6pm-7pm	1 st Grade: 7pm-8pm
August 23, Tuesday	2 nd Grade: 6pm-7pm	3 rd Grade: 7pm-8pm
August 24, Wednesday	4 th Grade: 6pm-7pm	5 th Grade: 7pm-8pm
August 25, Thursday	6 th Grade: 6pm-7pm	7 th & 8 th Grade: 7pm-8pm
August 26, Friday	Community Welcome Dinner 5pm-7pm – Salmon Creek Falls Cafeteria	



Calendar of Events

Event	Date	Location	Start	End
August				
Community Work Party	August 13	Flag Circle	9:00 AM	12:00 PM
Welcome Back Tea TK, K	August 16	Kinder	2:00 PM	3:00 PM
Welcome Induction Ceremony	August 17	Meadow	10:30 AM	11:00 AM
Back to School Week: TK, K, 1st	August 22	Classroom	6:00 PM	8:00 PM
Back to School Week: 2nd & 3rd	August 23	Classroom	6:00 PM	8:00 PM
Back to School Week: 4th & 5th	August 24	Classroom	6:00 PM	8:00 PM
Back to School Week: 6th, 7th & 8th	August 25	Classroom	6:00 PM	8:00 PM
Welcome Dinner	August 26	Falls Building	5:00 PM	7:00 PM
September				
Athletics & Band Sign Ups	September 2	Classroom		3:05 PM
Picture Day	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
October				
Farm to School Week	October 2 - 6	Garden		
Autumn Festival	October 6	Meadow	10:30 AM	1:10 PM
Fall Progress Conference Week	October 10 - 14	Classroom	1:10 PM	3:05 PM
Halloween Parade	October 31	Meadow	10:30 AM	11:00 AM
November				
End of 1st Trimester	November 10	N/A		
1st Trimester Honor Assembly	November 18	TBD	10:30 AM	11:30 AM
1st Trimester Report Cards Go Home	November 18	N/A		
December				
Harmony Choir @ Occidental Santa Visit	December TBA	Occidental	TBA	TBA
Winter Luminaire Concert & Forest Walk	December 15	MPR & Trail	6:00 PM	8:00 PM
January				
Harmony Field and Cistern Dedication	January 6	Harmony Field	10:30 AM	11:00 AM
February				
Winter Progress Conference Week	February 13-16	Classroom	1:10 PM	3:05 PM
Scholastic Showcase	February 16	Library	6:00 PM	8:00 PM
March				
End of 2nd Trimester	March 3	N/A		
Middle School Play	March 3	MPR	6:00 PM	7:30 PM
Middle School Play	March 4	MPR	11:00 AM	12:30 PM
Middle School Play	March 4	MPR	6:00 PM	7:30 PM
2nd Trimester Report Cards Go home	March 10	N/A		
2nd Trimester Honor Assembly	March 17	TBD	10:30 AM	11:30 AM
April				
Middle School Lego Robotics Competition	April TBA	Santa Rosa	TBD	TBD
Plant Sale	April 20	Garden	1:10 PM	3:05 PM
Spring Festival	April 20	Meadow	10:30 AM	1:10 PM
May				
State Testing	May 1 - 26	Classroom		
Color Run	May 12	Harmony Field	10:30 AM	11:30 AM
Spring Concert	May 12	TBD	6:00 PM	7:00 PM
June				
3rd Trimester Honor Assembly	June 2	MPR	10:30 AM	11:30 AM
Field Day	June 2	Harmony Field	11:30 AM	3:05 AM
Farewell Promotion Ceremony	June 7	Meadow	10:30 AM	11:30 AM
Graduation	June 7	Harmony Field	6:00 PM	7:30 PM
Graduation Garden Party (Graduates Only)	June 7	Garden	7:30 PM	10:00 PM
End of 3rd Trimester	June 7	N/A		
3rd Trimester Report Cards Go Home	June 16	N/A		
Summer School Session I Starts	June 15	Library	8:00 AM	5:00 PM
July				
Summer School Session I Ends	July 7	Library	8:00 AM	5:00 PM
Summer School Session II Starts	July 10	Library	8:00 AM	5:00 PM
Summer School Session II Ends	July 28	Library	8:00 AM	5:00 PM

Dates are subject to Change



■ Facilities Improvements

Wow! What a summer of construction we have had! 5 years ago, HUSD proposed a bond to our District residents to support repair and improvement of our facilities. The final phase of the project began in May 2022. This portion of the project began as a quest for an improved athletic field and track. The desire to keep the field a natural turf surface required some deep thought and engineering to ensure our increased irrigation demands did not adversely impact the spawning health of Salmon Creek. Due to great support from the Goldridge Resource Conservation District and the California Wildlife Conservation Board, our project was expanded to incorporate an extensive roof storm water capture and cistern system. The system has been designed to store 500,000 gallons of water annually (even during drought years) for use in field irrigation and fire suppression for emergencies.

In designing the stormwater system, a large portion of the interior of the campus needed to be excavated, leading to the important decision to rebuild it BETTER; focusing on improved ADA accessibility, longevity of materials, and cohesion of landscape design. After 3 decades of phased construction and changing educational models on the campus, our interior was a hodge-podge of strange walkways and slopes, a slippery deck and other strange artifacts (including storm drains that did not connect to an outlet!). The newly redesigned interior of our campus brings all our stages of construction into greater harmony with each other, and presented the opportunity unify the interior courtyard to the east of the library.

The field project itself also promises great improvements to athletics facilities including a gopher proof natural track and field, a new performing arts stage and living roof (on top of the cistern), expanded outdoor dining, and massively improved pedestrian and wheelchair flow throughout the campus. Due to necessary excavations, the old K-2 play structure was recycled and a new play structure is on order (Estimated install is December). In addition, the older grade 3-8 playground will gain a climbing tower and three swings including a fully accessible wheelchair buddy swing. These areas will feature new composite surfaces for full ADA accessibility. Finally, the Falls building assembly room will see some improvements to expand the floor area for presentations, student plays, and community meetings.

Though we have been hard at work over the summer, it's a large project and we are still under construction. The good news is that all of the northern pathways around school buildings will be completed and accessible by the start of school. The cistern itself is slated for completion by mid October, at which time the giant pile of dirt excavated for the cistern will be replaced around it, and the field and track install will be finished. The play structures are estimated for install by December. We expect to conduct our ribbon cutting dedication ceremony of the new facilities in January 2023. In the meantime, parking and access will at times be impacted. Please see additional parking/drop off/pickup information below.

As an aside, due to very favorable bond markets and thanks to the leadership of our Business Manager, Stacy Kalember, the bond sales came in below original estimated costs, saving our district property owners hundreds of dollars annually. We are thankful for the generosity of our district neighbors, and of the stewardship of financial reserves by previous boards, faculty and staff, to position our district to have the funding necessary to build the school of our dreams.

A tour of construction progress will be held SATURDAY, AUGUST 13th at 9:00AM. Following the tour we will be hosting a work party to complete the landscaping in the Unity Courtyard east of the Library. Bring your gloves and planting expertise! Children are welcome, but childcare is not provided; be prepared to guide them in our work.

Please RSVP to the work party by signing up through the following survey:

<https://forms.gle/x7jUMg9PFJgiGb7W8>



■ Faculty/Staff Changes & Hiring Opportunities

This summer saw changes to both our program and organization in preparation for the 2022-23 school year:

Our 7th and 8th grade humanities teacher, Tanya Turneure retired. Harmony was graced with our new teacher Dana Durfey, who had been a student teacher at Harmony years ago, and recently taught at Willowside in Oak Grove School District. Dana is also a school parent and has spent most of the summer tuning up her classroom ready to start the year. Please join harmony staff in welcoming Dana to her new role!

Due to budget reductions and changing program design, the dedicated art teacher position was ended, as was the PBL position. These programs will continue in a new form incorporated within core academic instruction by grade level staff.

Our librarian of many years, Nancy Prouty also retired. Our own paraeducator Denise Eufusia will be stepping into the role.

The summer also saw the departure of our Cafeteria and Garden liaison Joe. This position has now been redesigned into two positions as the role required more hours than one person could provide. Thus we have 2 new positions that we are currently hiring for. One is the Farm and Garden Assistant position (24 hours/week) the other is the Cafeteria/Food Services Assistant position (32 hours/week).

Harmony is hiring for a 1:1 Paraeducator Special Education Temporary Support Assistant. This is a 34 hours/week position that will be working with our RSP teacher and students in need of direct support.

Harmony is also hiring for a Paraeducator Classroom Assistant Position that we hope to fund through improved state resources for 2022-2023. This is also a 34 hours/week position and will be assisting in the upper grades.

With the introduction of an after-school care program for students, several other positions have extended hours to provide staffing through 5:00pm for the extended care program.

All of the open positions are available for applying via our job opportunities page on Edjoin: <https://www.edjoin.org/harmonyusd> Many of the jobs close in the coming days. Please let us know if you or someone you know is interested in applying.

■ COVID Protocols

After 2 years of a seemingly endless pandemic, things are shifting into more predictable routine and the growing body of research and understanding that we have accumulated globally on transmission and infection prepares us to more accurately target our mitigations. Our revised protocols from the Spring put in place effective thresholds to prevent severe outbreaks, though we were impacted in May with the 2nd wave of the Omicron variant. Indeed, since Omicron, Harmony has had 2 major crises in absences that stretched our staff to near break point. Only through very dedicated work by remaining staff have we been able to continue services without closure. In order to maintain services and reduce the risk of infection in our community, we will be continuing with levelled mitigations according to the relative prevalence of COVID virus cases in the community. We are following the strong recommendations of the CDPH in developing our guidelines. The full updated COVID protocols for fall 2022 is posted on our website, but the major mitigation factors: ventilation, masking, testing and quarantine are discussed below. In addition, details on Campus accessibility (now greatly expanded), Drop Off and Pickup, and Community Events are provided below.

Harmony Union School District • 1935 Bohemian Hwy • Occidental, CA 95645 • 707-874-1205



Ventilation and Facilities

We are grateful for the incredible advice and assistance of David Moore throughout the pandemic. Unknown to many, David is a leading expert in the field of air quality in schools and buildings (and happens to be a Harmony parent). David approached us early in the pandemic to begin mechanical and protocol improvements to air quality in our buildings with an eye to both COVID spread as well as complications to COVID practices during time of wildfire smoke conditions. Our facilities continue in their use of top quality air filtration and ventilation settings, we continue to monitor air quality through the surrogate measure of CO2 concentration and continue to test the efficacy of these protocols. Air quality is a significant factor in controlling the spread of COVID indoors along with masks when case rates are high.

Masking

We will continue with a tiered response to varying levels of COVID in our community. When levels are low, masking will be optional for students indoors. When levels are elevated (above 20 cases per 100k in Sonoma County), masks will be required indoors (and in vehicles, museums, etc). Currently our Sonoma County case rate is above 20/100k. Masks will be required indoors for the start of school, but as case rates reduce, we expect to return to optional indoor masking.

Testing & Quarantine

The CDPH has now discontinued their routine surveillance testing program. This means that weekly, asymptomatic testing will not be conducted schoolwide. Instead, we will migrate to a “**response**” testing model that uses rapid antigen tests at moments of greatest risk for contact spread. We will be testing:

- An individual student or staff person when they are experiencing symptoms
- A classroom cohort when a COVID positive case exposure has occurred for that group
- For all individuals returning from holiday breaks and travels

In these situations, testing and/or quarantine is required. If an individual tests positive, they will need to quarantine away from school and school activities for at least 5 days if they yield a negative test at start of day 6 or as much as 10 days if still testing positive. In most cases, tests can be conducted at school using school provided test kits. Home tests must be documented with a photo and forwarded to testresult@harmonyusd.org

As described above, rapid antigen test kits will be distributed from the school starting **August 12 – Friday at 9am**. These tests must be used on August 16th or the morning of August 17th to clear your child for return to school for the first day. Additional test kits will be made available as needed throughout the year. Our supply is governed by state purchasing but we are hopeful that we will have enough stock to support families and school staff throughout the year.

Field Trips

We will be holding field trips this year, much as last year, though there may be some restrictions due to COVID. Overnight field trips are being planned, and COVID protocols will be put in place to mitigate risks. Not ALL trips may occur as normal however. Some trips may be adjusted due to location availability or complications presented by COVID measures. Teachers will be updating classes on planned field trips during class meetings held August 22-25 and throughout the year.

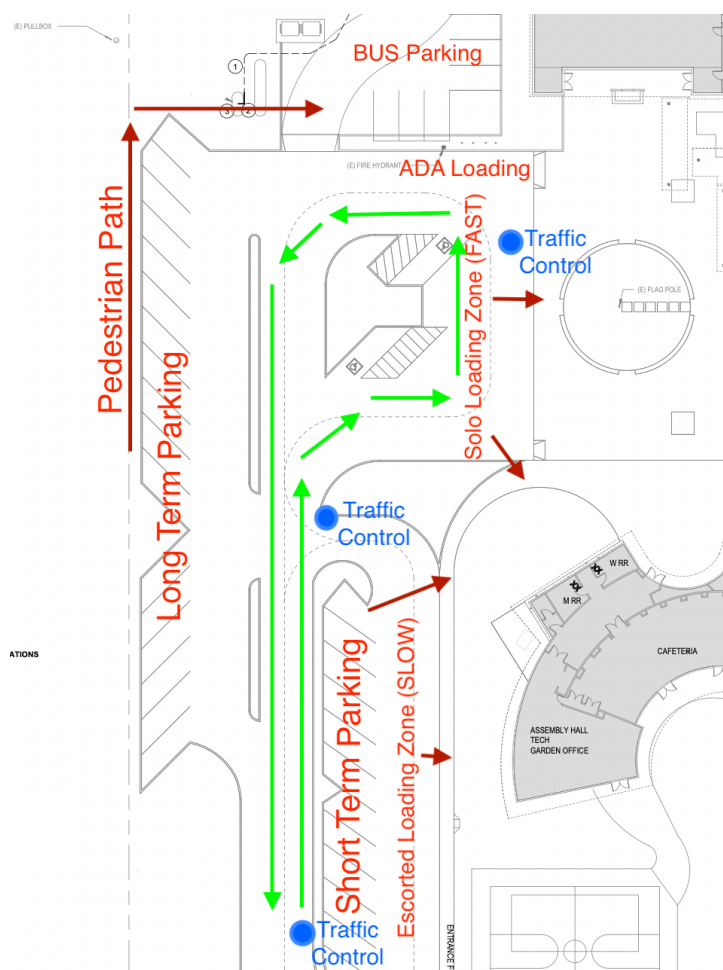
Campus Accessibility

The campus will be accessible for visiting during and after the school day, though construction may impact which areas are available. Please remember that if the COVID tier is elevated, masks are required indoors (and are available in the office). Volunteering will also be welcomed according to COVID protocols (Vaxed or negative antigen)

For more details on COVID protocols please visit our website at harmonyusd.org. Links to protocols are at the bottom of the page

■ Parking, Drop Off and Pickup

This year marks the return of traditional pickup and drop off. We have tried to modify the traditional model to continue the level of safety and attendance awareness we benefitted from with COVID protocols, while helping our community reconnect through greater campus accessibility and engagement. To improve safety over the traditional practices from several years ago, we are institute categorized parking areas to improve pedestrian safety and reduce interruption of traffic flows.



Parking & Drop Off

The parking area formerly known as “A” on the blacktop is closed due to construction.

Parking Lot B, just west of the basketball courts will become **Short Term Parking & Escorted Loading Zone (SLOW)** This area is for **PARKING & ESCORTING** your child to the front of the school. Both diagonal spaces at the island **AND** parallel spaces next to the sidewalk curb may be used. For diagonal parking participants you **MUST** escort your child across the flow of traffic to the sidewalk. For parallel parking participants open doors next to the sidewalk carefully...please watch for pedestrians.

Parking Lot C, along the Creekside fence is reserved for **Long Term Parking**. Only park in this area if you expect to stay on site for more than ½ hour. This area will largely be filled by staff in the morning, in the afternoon, this is a good place to park if staying for after school gatherings. When exiting your car here, please make your way to the **NORTH** end of this parking area to the gravel lot by the old portable and gym. This is the path of travel to the school during pickup and drop off **NOT** across the loading zone roundabout.

The **Solo Loading Zone (FAST)** will move from the middle driveway we’ve been to the road that turns right towards the flag circle. **PLEASE** use the painted line on the asphalt as the indicator for the unloading curb...not the concrete curb. This provides space to unload and for children to transit around the flag circle. When dropping or picking people up, **ALWAYS** look to the left before re-merging with traffic to complete the circle and return to the exit path out of the parking lot to the south. Children and adults should **NOT** be transiting through this area during pickup and drop off. Children **MUST** exit to the right side of the car. Please do not exit your vehicle from the **DRIVER** side. If your child needs help getting out of the car...park in the **Short Term Parking / Escorted Loading Zone** and unload that way.



Pickup

After School Pickup will occur in much the same fashion as the morning drop off with one major exception regarding the Solo Loading Zone (FAST), described below

Parking Lot A will remain closed due to construction

The **Short Term Parking & Escorted Loading Zone (SLOW)** is where you should park if you wish to park your car and enter the campus to retrieve your child from the classroom or from the flag circle or from the sidewalk. **DO NOT** park here if you plan to stay for more than 10 minutes. If you plan to meet with friends and have a discussion, **PLEASE** park in the long-term parking. We need this zone to be able to refresh its open spaces often for new arriving parents.

The **Long Term Parking** area may be used to park, walk to the campus area, retrieve your child and then depart. Please note that you must use the pedestrian pathway to the north of this area...do **NOT** cross the main road through the parking lot east to west. Use the gravel parking area at the north end of our campus to transit to the main campus facility. After picking up your child, please use the same return path, away from traffic.

The **Solo Loading Zone (FAST)** should be used similar to the way that an airport loading zone is used. If you pull up to the loading zone and your child is **NOT** visible and ready to load, you will need to pull ahead to the Long Term Parking area to park and retrieve your child (use the pedestrian path please). Another option is to head back to the bridge and re-route to the **Short Term Escorted Parking** area...park there, and then walk to the campus to escort your child back. The **SOLO** loading zone **IS ONLY** for students who are ready at the curb and able to load through the **PASSENGER SIDE ONLY** without the driver exiting the vehicle. Again, Drivers **MAY NOT EXIT** their vehicle in the **Solo Loading Zone**.

If you wish to connect with a teacher for a conversation, please contact them in advance to set up a time. Teachers often have other tasks to perform at the end of the day. Their contract duty time typically ends at 3:05. Finally, please be mindful of construction zone restrictions when visiting the campus. We expect conditions to improve greatly in mid-October, but until then, we will be sharing space with a lot of activity.

■ **Special Projects for 2022-2023**

NEW No Cost After School Program

As part of the Governor and Legislature's efforts to both remediate lost instruction time during COVID as well as to expand the notion of schools as Community Schools, providing support services to families that extend beyond just academics or just the school day, the state has added Expanded Learning Opportunity Program funds for 2022-2023. This funding was what arrived late in the spring that allowed for the hasty development of a summer school program. Though we apologize for the late notification for this last summer, we are announcing early that we will be offering summer school for 2023. But perhaps more immediately important, the increased ELOP funding allows us to build an after school care program that will run from 3:05pm to 5:00pm to provide an extended day for families that need additional care support. The program begins with homework study hall and then transition to games, activities and outdoor play as students complete their work. This program will be **FREE** to all families, and incredible opportunity. Note that bus service is not provided at the end of aftercare so children will need to be picked up from school. If you plan to use after school care for your child, please complete the survey here: <https://forms.gle/8qXApQNQodrVzDXh8>

Please note that we are still actively hiring for this opportunity, and starting the program is contingent on our ability to secure adequate staffing. At this time, we do not believe after school care will be ready until after Labor Day, September 6th. We will notify families if there is a change. Also bus service is not available.



NEW No Cost Food Meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Another remarkable service program that the state has funded is no cost food service for all students. This means that any child can participate in the breakfast or lunch program, regardless of need. Though there is no financial threshold for eligibility, it is still VERY important to Harmony for reimbursement purposes to collect eligibility data for reporting to the state. **Please return the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) eligibility form to the office as soon as you are able.** It will be in the packet sent out at the end of this week.

We are grateful to the state for this funding, but we must also note that the quality and cost of the food at Harmony FAR outpaces our reimbursed costs. Approximately \$100k is spent from our general fund to support the food service program, and this does not take into account the additional staffing needs of our farm to school system including our garden staff. Please know that your donation to the ARK foundation is vital to the ability to continue the Farm to School program, and to continue the high level of quality food we provide to the kids. Though the state has been very generous in this change of funding, it will fall short of our actual costs. Indeed, without the normal contributions from families who were previously not eligible for free/reduced meals, we are experiencing decreased revenue to offset the low reimbursement rates.

Summer School 2023

As mentioned above, we will be hosting the summer boost program for summer 2023. We had a great time with our kids over the summer, working on reading and math while enjoying some time in the forest and baking together (hooray for cinnamon rolls!). Our next summer will again be split into session 1 and 2. Summer school is free, but is space limited. Sign ups will be out in April and May. The program runs from 8:00am to 5:00pm. Some families picked up early, but a commitment for 8:00am to 12:00 is essential to ensure students can make academic progress. Please note that absence impact development, we do not recommend registering for a session when the student may depart for several days for a trip.

The dates of the session are as follows:

Session I	June 15 – July 7 (Closed June 19 and July 4)	8:00am – 5:00pm
Session II	July 10 – July 28	8:00am – 5:00pm

Academic Coaching Teams & Student Support

Our Student Resource Team has been working diligently throughout the pandemic to ensure no student slips through the cracks. Even during lockdown, we were visiting students and bringing in extra resources to help our students stay engaged and continue their progress. Upon reopening in full last year, the Student Resource Team reorganized the intervention support program to move more of its efforts into the classroom to allow teachers too organize targeted instructional groups. This delivered huge growth for our kids in reading and writing last year. We will be continuing the program this year and will be looking for opportunities to expand the impact of the program into other grades and subject areas. Much thanks to our incredible faculty team for building this program from scratch for 2021-2022, and for shepherding this program into the new year for 2022-2023.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Development

3 years ago, our campus experienced a challenge in confronting what it means to be a school that celebrates diversity and works to end discrimination for our children, families, and community. In the aftermath of the rainbow flag crisis, we were supported by our Restorative Practices mentor, Maria Freebairn Smith by holding a series of conversations with parents and community members about issues of equity, diversity and inclusion. Unfortunately, the pandemic hit midstream, and limited our ability to come together to further these discussions.

Given the dangerous polarization and extremism that our society has been subjected to over the past several years, that has only worsened during COVID, it is essential that we rejuvenate our practice of coming together in diverse community to discuss these issues. It is clear that the State of California is committed to proactive



work to ensure the health and well-being of students and to protect them from harassment, discrimination and threat. What is not so clear at the local level, is what this means for schools, for our curriculum, and for our own community as we learn better ways to support all of our children, seeing them in their united humanity, and also recognizing the unique circumstances that each of us carry due to historical and present day injustices, prejudices, and campaigns of misinformation. We will be moving these discussions forward in the coming months and invite your participation and support.

Coherence and Identity of Harmony/Salmon Creek

As the construction improvements represent the greatly improved physical cohesion of our facility, we are also working to bring greater integration and unity in our school programs. Questions over the past year have been popping up over the artifacts of the past split (1992) and then re-consolidation (2005) of the lower grades and upper grades programs. One notable artifact is the split name of our schools on campus, and the different administrative rules that govern our TK-1 program (Harmony Elementary) from that of our 2-8 program (Salmon Creek). We will be exploring this issue in the coming months. Our goal is to pursue options that bring us together, simplify unneeded complexity, and develop a common identity that will serve our consolidated campus for years to come. Outreach to families will follow in the coming weeks to seek your perspective on campus identity.

Reserve Funding at Harmony

Another artifact of years past is reserve funding for Harmony. Specifically, a reserve fund was developed years ago, at the beginning of the new LCFF funding model formulated under Governor Brown, that placed at risk, the long term financial health of the district, particularly given its charter authorization of Pathways. As time has passed however, the risk posed by the new funding model did not materialize, and it is time to consider how best to manage these reserve funds going forward. This will be a focus of our board, faculty and staff and community in the coming year.

■ School Board & Administration Updates

Enrollment Packets

The office will be sending start of the year enrollment packets to all families on Friday, August 12th via email. The forms are fillable pdfs. Please return them via email or hard copy to the office by August 16th. Forms may be submitted to Suzi Heron at sheron@harmonyusd.org. Please notify the school of vaccinations you have completed over the summer, and remember all forms are required in order for your child to start school on Wednesday August 17th.

Open Board Positions

Our Harmony USD Board has 3 positions that are open for the Fall 2022 Election. If you are interested in running, please contact the office or the Sonoma County Registrar office for information. The deadline to announce candidacy for the board election is August 12th.

New Student Information System

Our admin team, particularly Missy and Suzi, have been working all summer converting our old student data system to the new system used by most other districts in the county. Harmony is migrating to AERIES, which is the same information system used by West County High School District. By migrating we will better interconnect with the county systems, and will better prepare our families for the software ecosystem that they may be interacting with in high school. AERIES provides better integration for student supports, report card generation and family access, absence reporting, and management of family contacts and communication.



New Communication tools

In addition to AERIES, we are completing our integration of Blackboard Connect, a community notification system that will improve our ability to send out updates and messages to families. Both programs have parent mobile apps that we will be using to connect our families to the school. More information about these apps will be provided in the coming weeks.

Budget Update

Our Harmony community has been working diligently to develop annual budgets that ensure our students receive the best education we can offer. While doing so, we have also made significant improvements to the compensation of certificated and classified staff, expanding steps for continued advancement, and levelling up base pay rates, all while maintaining a strong benefits package. We appreciate the collaborative work of our board and our membership groups.

The 2022-2023 school year poses some challenges for our budget. Though the state sees an unprecedented increase in tax receipts from the health of the stock market last year, most of the increased funding is being packaged as one time commitments that will expire without another bumper year in 2022-2023. At the same time, inflation is hitting all of us, both employees as well as vendors and service providers. Our district is seeing significant increases in costs beyond our projections and we do not expect inflation to turn negative next year when one time moneys are no longer available. We will need to ensure that any ongoing commitments adopted by the district are able to be paid for in future years when the one time money goes away.

One time funding for the 2022-2023 school year will be used to provide additional support for students, from free after school programming and summer school, to expanded staff support during the school day. We will also be using some of the one time funding to support curriculum implementations and our preparations to provide full TK enrollment to all 4 year old children. On the horizon is also universal preschool, with additional funding and grants coming online for programs that may see their start in 2025-2026.

Other priority areas for spending include the acquisition of an emergency power backup system for our school. The price tag for such a project is between \$500k to \$1m. We are pursuing options for grant funding support, but we may need to consider general/reserve funding to support the project. Last year we experienced 3 days of school closure due to power loss.

Additional facilities and systems improvements are also being examined including school security. We have conducted a site security review with the Sherriff's Department and we are consulting with service providers and vendors on various options to improve security for our site. We will have proposals before the board in the fall to consider for adoption.

All that said, we believe that, at least for 2022-2023, we will likely remain neutral in our budget position (neutral is good). Planning for the next few years out presents much challenge however, and we see the potential for significant shortfalls if we do not remain prudent in bringing on additional spending for 2022-2023. As always, the situation is dynamic. A recession can turn our estimates on a dime.

Our budget committee will continue meeting this year as we work through these challenges. We will be providing budget updates as the year progresses to keep our community informed of the issues impacting our planning and programs.