



January 2018

Dear Parents,

Over the past year, we have made great strides towards NYS AIS Accreditation (anticipated Fall 2018) and AWSNA Accreditation (anticipated in 2019-2020). As part of this process, we are identifying areas where we excel and areas for focused improvement.

Previously, we overhauled our accounting policies and procedures, receiving commendations on these improvements from independent auditors for the past two years. We are now focusing more on improving our sustainability. To this end, as the budgeting process began this past fall for the 2018-19 school year, we researched tuition models used by schools both locally and across North America and carefully examined our school's demographics. Our sustainability efforts also included the creation of a new Board committee, Enrollment and Marketing.

After a thorough review of many factors, the Board of Trustees has decided NOT to increase tuition rates for the upcoming year. The tuition for the grades will actually decrease and early childhood tuition rates will remain the same.

How does lowering tuition help sustainability? The answer is in our demographics. For the current school year, 76% of grades students receive some form of tuition assistance. Lowering the tuition for grades students will help make our school more affordable for more families and free up tuition assistance money. Our goal is to make a Waldorf Education affordable to as many children in the area as possible and to increase our enrollment. Even if there is no increase in enrollment, we believe that the tuition decrease will have a small impact on our overall budget given the resulting reduction in tuition assistance money needed by current AWS families. We encourage families who are able to pay more, to increase their tax-deductible annual fund donation to offset the tuition decrease.

Based on our research of different tuition models, it was decided to move to a tiered tuition, with Grades 1 and 2 having the lowest grades tuition and Grades 6-8 having the highest tuition. It was also decided to reduce the fees for Grades 6-8 based on a projected reduction in expenses covered by the fees. See the 2018-19 Tuition and Fees Schedule for more details on the new tuition rates.

In addition to setting tuition earlier, we are moving the enrollment deadline earlier to be more in-line with the practices of other independent schools who have enrollment take place during January and February. Timely enrollment allows ample time for curricular, financial, and strategic planning for the upcoming school year. To encourage families to enroll in a timely manner, we are introducing a registration fee. If the registration fee is paid by the enrollment deadline, that amount is credited against the family's last tuition payment for 2018-19.

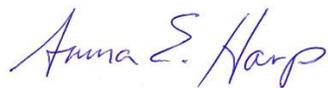
Similarly, we have moved the timeline for applying for financial assistance earlier. Families who apply after the deadline will have \$500 deducted from any assistance awarded.

We will again have the raffle fundraising commitment as another part of our financial sustainability formula. Current families may have all of their commitment released by referring a new family who enrolls at least one grade students at AWS. See the 2018-19 Tuition and Fees Schedule for more details.

Finally, we have factored parent engagement into our future sustainability. All independent schools rely on parents in multiple ways and Waldorf Schools are particularly designed to be community-based schools. We are grateful to the many AWS families who already spend hours volunteering and attending our events. To encourage participation by all parents, we have added Parent Participation Hours which if not met will be invoiced at an assigned dollar value. We believe parents will not find it difficult to meet and exceed this participation requirement and reap the many added benefits of participating in this active and diverse school community.

We thank you for supporting our efforts to consciously create a sustainable environment for our outstanding school!

In Gratitude,



Anna Harp  
Administrator



Johannes Aubrecht  
Board of Trustees, Treasurer

Aurora Waldorf School  
525 West Falls Rd, West Falls, NY 14170  
Phone: (716) 655-2029 Fax: (716) 655-3265



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