



July 22, 2020

CBA Parents and Students:

I hope this update finds you and your families safe, healthy, and enjoying the summer as much as possible. Earlier this month, we were finally able to have our in-person graduation ceremony for the class of 2020, and I shared with them a portion of Proverb 16 during my introduction. Let us be mindful of those verses as we prepare for the 2020-21 school year. “Man may make plans in his heart, but what the tongue utters is from the Lord. All the ways of a man may be pure in his own eyes but it is the Lord who proves the Spirit. Entrust your works to the Lord and your plans will succeed!” This proverb reminds us, in a significant way, that while we plan and envision what each year of our lives may look like, in reality we can never know what to expect or what we may be presented with. We must have faith and entrust our works to the Lord. As we consider the beginning of the new academic year, it is difficult to think of a more uncertain time in which we have had to begin school in September. Let us find solace in our faith.

Rest assured that the other administrators and I have been working hard to discern how we can best conduct CBA’s mission and serve our students in the safest way possible. Parent and student surveys from the end of last school year were carefully reviewed and we’ve met with a faculty committee as well as our department chairs for input and perspective. There has been considerable time spent contemplating how to deal with competing issues, while constantly evaluating emerging and changing information. We have tried to consider the totality of students’ needs, including their social and emotional health in addition to their academics, within the current circumstances of our world. We have paid close attention to the transmission rate in New Jersey, which is currently much lower than many other places in the country, while also acknowledging that it could increase and affect our plans. This new reality does not seem to be something fleeting that will quickly pass, but one that we have to learn to live in by modifying our behavior. The American Academy of Pediatrics offers some very sensible approaches and takes children’s overall health, safety, and education into account. As such, it has been determined that in order to best pursue CBA’s mission, we will move forward with bringing **all students back to school five days a week in September**. All students will be required to **wear masks at all times**, except when eating lunch, and desks will be placed at least **three feet apart** as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Evidence suggests that the transmission rate in a controlled environment where everyone is wearing masks and not in contact with one another can be quite low.

There will be a number of other safety precautions and modifications, such as daily health screenings, elimination of homeroom and locker usage, multiple lunch locations, plexiglass, etc., put in place in order to do this as safely as possible. One such precaution in which we



are making a substantial investment, **Bipolar Ionization**, is a major step in air purification that deactivates harmful substances like bacteria, mold, allergens, and viruses.

We do understand, however, that there will likely be points that we will have to close school and go fully online. Knowing that this is likely an inevitability, we hope to be prepared to do that and then come back to school as seamlessly as possible. Some students may not feel comfortable coming into school when we come back in person and they will have the option to “go to CBA” online, while other students may have to quarantine for two weeks due to COVID exposure; so we will probably always have **some students fully online throughout the year**. We have invested in technology (*Swivl* devices) to allow **live streaming** and/or recording of all classes. Flexibility will be one of our priorities in the 2020-21 school year.

Changing our schedule was something that was explored in agonizing detail, but each benefit created a number of other issues. We looked at different block schedules in order to reduce contact points between students and teachers, and so that we could use the exact same schedule if/when we go online. In the end, the problems associated with this drastic of a change, both from a logistical standpoint and a pedagogical one, were too much to overcome in such a short period of time. Therefore, we will be using our **regular eight period, six day cycle, with modifications** when we are on site, in-person at CBA. However, if/when we are required to move fully online, it does not seem constructive to have students sitting in front of a screen through seven Zoom sessions per day. Although there is certainly a benefit to always being on the same schedule, whether in school or online, the environments are just so different that we do not feel this is the best approach. Therefore, the **online schedule will be a modified block schedule** that divides the regular “A day” periods **over 2 days**. It will run every day, Monday through Friday, alternating between “A day” 1-4 and “A day” 5-8. The online schedule will be printed on the calendar along with the regular letter days to reduce any confusion. The modified block times will be printed in the student handbook just like the other schedules we have. In the event that we are forced to use a hybrid approach with half of the students in the building and half online, we will follow the regular eight-period schedule. Teachers will instruct each day as if all students were present in class, and the students at home will follow along online through live streaming. Although in this case students will have to participate in six or seven Zoom classes per day, they would only do that every other day and be in school on the alternating days.

The **number of digital platforms and software used will be limited and announced** ahead of time. We plan on going **paperless** as much as possible right from the beginning of the year, both to reduce touch points and so that the same procedures and platforms can be used if we go online. We will **continue to use our current LMS, PowerSchool Learning**, as they have assured us of improvements in dealing with the volume increase due to the proliferation of online learning. All **teachers will be required to use Zoom** for streaming and/or remote learning; it is what works best with the *Swivl* streaming devices and we have purchased an



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institutional license to increase security and add features. Students will **not be using lockers** this year, in order to limit hall traffic and students congregating, and they therefore will not be required to have all of their books with them in class, just their computers.

As I stated earlier, there has been quite a lot of work done to try to address potential issues associated with COVID-19. What follows is not an exhaustive list, but bullet points of what is planned. A detailed plan will be ready next month and more information will be disseminated.

- Daily online Covid-19 health screenings, including temperature recordings, for all students - performed by parents and submitted online before school begins.
- Masks required at all times (except during lunch where students will be placed 6ft apart instead of 3 so that they can remove their masks to eat).
- Installation of Bipolar Ionization apparatus in each classroom unit ventilator, as well as in central HVAC units for the larger common areas.
- HVAC filters upgraded to the highest MERV level the system can handle wherever possible.
- HVAC systems set to increase fresh air flow/air circulation where possible.
- Cleaning service using a new product with guaranteed COVID kill certification and following proper protocols for safe and effective cleaning every day after school
- Plexiglass barrier in every classroom for teachers
- Plexiglass barriers in other areas as needed (Main office, Guidance office etc.)
- Member of Administration completed Johns Hopkins Covid 19 Contract Tracing Certification and the Association for State and Territorial Health Officials Contract Tracing Training
- Dedicated entrances with staggered arrival times for Freshmen/Sophomores and Juniors/Seniors
- No homeroom period to facilitate staggered arrival and reduce contact and hall traffic
- Both juniors and seniors permitted late arrival/early departure based on free periods
- Modification of dress code, in consideration of climate during the mask requirement
- Hand Sanitizer in every classroom as well as cafeteria and other spaces throughout the school
- Signage to encourage students to wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds.
- Classrooms arranged to maximize separation between students; a minimum of 3ft apart with desks facing the same direction.
- Food-Safe cleaning product in each classroom to allow for frequent cleaning of desks
- Restroom use policy to limit contact
- No locker use to prevent students congregating and to keep them moving.
- Hallways will be divided for unidirectional use.
- Limited or no food service (pre ordered box lunches if anything), students encouraged to bring their own lunches
- Lunches to be divided among several locations (cafeteria, one gym, large room in Henderson, etc.) allowing for proper social distancing - at least 6ft since masks will need to be removed for eating.
- Use of outdoor space when applicable: lunch and perhaps other times if teachers wish to take a class outside, socially distanced walks during lunch or phys ed, etc.
- Where possible, grade levels scheduled by wing to cut down on interaction
- Protocol for symptomatic staff and students, including isolation room
- Protocols for direct and indirect COVID exposures



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- Visitor Restrictions
- Purchase of *Swivl* hardware and software to allow for live streaming/recording of classes to accommodate distance learning
- Quarterly progress reports for students to increased parent notification regarding grades
- Limitation of the number of digital platforms used and communication when school begins regarding the ones that are used
- Best Practices Manual to be developed with faculty committee to share latest information on software and other strategies to utilize for both in person and distance learning
- Professional Development for faculty
- Strategies being developed to adapt Campus Ministry, Service Program, assemblies and extracurricular activities to meet the requirements created by the pandemic while still maintaining the Catholic, Lasallian Identity of CBA

More communications will follow as the plan is developed in detail, but we will be pushing back our **starting dates; Student Orientation days are now Sophomores & Juniors on Wednesday September 9, and Freshmen & Seniors on Thursday September 10, with our first full day of classes on Friday September 11.**

One thing that could complicate an already difficult situation is transportation. MOESC has informed us that they are having difficulty getting bus companies to bid on non-public school routes during the Covid-19 pandemic. Dr. Tara Beams, acting superintendent of MOESC, stated in a letter to non-public school administrators, “We will continue to put these routes out to bid, however, as more equipment may be needed for regular in-district routes, special education routes, and vocational routes, I expect that most non-public routes will not be procured and students will be offered Aide in Lieu.” We continue to work with districts and MOESC on this issue and will have more information for you in August communications.

I know that some of you are eager to get the students back in person and others may be apprehensive and perhaps carrying some anxiety about reopening. Both are understandable, and some of you likely have both feelings simultaneously. Again, the administration has been working diligently to put forth a safe plan that deals with our current reality while still performing our Lasallian mission and serving our students holistically. I wish you all continued health, rest, and enjoyment during these summer months.

God Bless you,

Mr. Fales