



Friday, March 26, 2021

Dear BMS Families,

It has been a little while since my last E-News Flash communication, and I felt it was a good time to share a few important updates with you... We have A LOT of great things happening at BMS!

Spring is finally upon us, and enrollment is in full swing! We have many students currently enrolling and re-enrolling, which is very inspiring for us! We are eager to keep that process rolling with your help as well as focus on some upcoming promotion and advertisement across the area. Please join us in sharing with others what BMS has to offer. We are looking forward to some great activities this spring and summer and anticipate somewhat of a return to "normal" in the fall, Lord willing! We are focused on a number of exciting Strategic Planning goals and new initiatives for growth and development over the coming months and next few years!

That being said, current data implies that the COVID-19 impact in our area is certainly trending downward with BMS holding steady at ZERO positive cases for several months now! We continue to be careful, respectful of and receptive to area concerns, and have ongoing thorough cleaning across campus. However, as the CDC and Wolf Administration have recently shared updates on increased gathering capacities and decreased restrictions across PA - including less social distancing and limiting virtual instruction in schools, we are even more affirmed in our cautious, yet realistic approaches and feeling the positive winds of change around us!

Also, I have been working with the TIU and our faculty and staff over the past month to share information about optional vaccine opportunities in our area for education workers, which has been such an uplifting shift for me from several months ago when I was navigating positive cases with families, assisting with contact tracing, and managing quarantines with the DOH. How far we have come with God's grace and never ending wisdom through the waves and still waters of this unpredictable season. It's hard to believe that it has been over a full year already since the pandemic began, but we certainly have a lot to be thankful for as our students continue to learn and grow in new ways at BMS. Praise the Lord!!!

Since this season has brought about many changes to our general approaches and formatting, with fluid adjustments along the way, we have decided to hold off on standardized testing this spring. Taking into consideration various factors including scheduling challenges and the overall impact of COVID-19 on our students and families, regardless of our focused push to maintain safe in-person instruction this year, we are concerned that test scores would not be entirely true/valid measurements to accurately inform instruction. Our current Terra-Nova test is being discontinued, and I am presently looking at quality replacement options that could be covered by Act 89 funding through the TIU to save what would have previously been spent annually on standardized testing.

On a related note, due to some current Act 89 program expenses and limited funding through the TIU, we will unfortunately not be able to hold our typical TIU-based summer tutoring this year. However, there may be an alternative option there that is currently being explored, and I will make sure to share any developments as I receive them. It is important to us to be able to support the learning of our students throughout the year, and I will make every effort to establish some form of quality continued learning opportunities for the summer months.

Lastly, as I shared in some of my updates last year, we have been working through a process to implement a cutting-edge whole campus security and safety alert system with a company called VOLO. This internal program will not replace our current use of RenWeb for non-emergency notifications. Over the course of the year, I have walked with my admin team, faculty, and staff through the various stages of program development, rollout, and implementation, and we are finally at the point where I am working with our friends at Mifflin County Regional Police Dept. to finalize this process and have everyone connected through VOLO - focused on maintaining safety for students and staff at BMS. Also, I am in the process of adding additional indoor and outdoor cameras with state-of-the-art monitoring technology that will assist us in these security enhancement efforts.

Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership with us, and may you experience God's renewal and refreshing this spring as we draw closer to the end of another school year!

Yours In Christ,

Nicholas J. Wilson

Superintendent
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