

# **Belleville Mennonite School**

*Develop Minds. Build Faith. Be Disciples.*

## **Student Handbook 2022-23**



Approved by  
Pennsylvania Department of Education

Member  
Association of Christian Schools International

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## **I. About BMS**

### **A. Organization and Administration**

Belleville Mennonite School is a patrons' school. As such it does not have any direct organizational ties with a church or other organization, but is owned and operated by the patron body of the school. Governing authority is vested in a nine member Board of Trustees elected from the patron body, one-third of which are elected annually. A financial report of the year immediately past and a proposed budget for the upcoming school year are presented for approval at the annual patrons' meeting each fall.

The chief administrative officer of the school is the Superintendent, who reports directly to the Board of Trustees and who is responsible for all areas of the school's operation.

### **B. Mission & Vision**

Our Mission: Belleville Mennonite School provides a Christ-centered education and Biblical worldview that inspires students to develop minds, build faith, and be disciples.

Our Vision: Empowering students to cultivate academic excellence and a passion for Christ.

### **C. Statement of Faith and Biblical Authority**

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe that God is the Creator of all things, a God of providence, and the Author of our salvation through Christ.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, who for our salvation took upon Himself human nature. He was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and revealed God to the human family, suffered a vicarious death, was resurrected and ascended to the Father, where he now appears as our intercessor. We believe in His personal return to power and glory.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, that He was sent by the Father and Christ, that He loves, searches, testifies, guides, empowers, and intercedes for the believers.

We believe the Holy Scriptures are verbally inspired by God and are only infallible rule of faith and practice.

We believe that man was created holy and that through disobedience fell and therefore is by nature and practice, a sinner separated from God and can become God's child only by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and that from all eternity God knew who would be the believers in Christ, and as such are elected according to the foreknowledge of God.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and unsaved; those that are saved unto the resurrection of life, those unsaved unto the resurrection of damnation.

We believe that the Church is the Body of Christ, a brotherhood of redeemed, a disciplined people obedient to the Word of God, who live by the principle of love and who refrain from force and violence in human relations with an inner urge to build and extend the Kingdom of God by the conversion of men to Christ.

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all we believe. For purposes of doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, our Board of Trustees is the school's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

## **D. Statement on Sexuality and Marriage**

We believe that God immutably creates each person to reflect His image as male or female.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God. We do not consider homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgenderism as acceptable alternative lifestyles or sexual "preferences." They are incompatible with the divine design for sexuality and the marriage covenant, as well as unhealthy and destructive to individual persons, families, and society.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive and lifelong union, as delineated in Scripture.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the school, and to provide a Biblical role model to the students and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Belleville Mennonite School in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, must abide by and agree to this Statement on Sexuality and Marriage and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Compassion compels us to support the healing of those who wish to change their destructive behavior.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Accordingly, hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the policies of the school. Sympathy must be extended to those who struggle with unwanted same-sex attractions, and every effort should be made to assist such persons to overcome those attractions, as many already have.

## **E. Philosophy and Objectives**

The educational philosophy of Belleville Mennonite School is based on the belief that all truth emanates from God; that it is revealed in the Bible and in the person of Jesus Christ, and that it may also be discovered through the sciences, the humanities and the arts. The Bible is accepted as God's inspired Word and is considered to be the final authority for faith and life.

God created the universe and all of life to bring glory to Him. This was especially true of man who was created in God's image. Sin broke that relationship with God, which can only be restored through personal acceptance of the redemption offered by Christ. The restored love relationship with Christ, lived through the power of the Holy Spirit, results in the healing of relationships with others.

Education then is understood to be that entire process whereby persons are guided in developing a comprehensive life orientation which is centered on God and which is based on both revealed and discoverable truth. The primary responsibility for this task belongs to parents. At their request, the Christian school becomes a partner in providing this education. Thus, Belleville Mennonite School purposes to educate toward academic excellence for such a life orientation. The school has been established to offer children and young people, regardless of denomination, race or national origin, a high quality Christian education.

From this philosophy flows aims and objectives:

1. For the spiritual and moral growth of our students, we seek:
  - a. to teach the Bible as God's inspired Word and to develop attitudes of love and respect toward it.
  - b. to lead the pupil to a personal relationship with Christ as Savior and as Lord of all life.
  - c. to impart an understanding of each Christian's place in the church and its worldwide task of witness, evangelism and discipline.
  - d. to communicate an understanding of, and develop an appreciation for, the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage and interpretation of faith.
  - e. to encourage the development of self-discipline and responsibility in the student, based on respect for God and God-given authority.
  - f. to help the student develop his or her own integrated view of life which recognizes the Lordship of Christ in all creation and history.
  - g. to teach that all human life is sacred, beginning at conception and ending only at God's command.
  - h. to instruct moral standards of purity leading the student into a clear understanding that sexual involvement is reserved for marriage in which one man and one woman are committed to each other for life.
  - i. to assist the student towards healthy concepts of Christian parenting and that parenting is a high calling of God that requires, love, strength, courage and commitment.



2. For the personal and social growth of students, we aim:
  - a. to help students develop a proper understanding, acceptance and respect for themselves and for others as unique individuals created in the image of God.
  - b. to encourage and equip the student to function as a responsible member of the larger Christian Community, which includes the home, the school and the church.
  - c. to encourage students to set high, but realistic goals for themselves and to provide the necessary skills and personal support to help them achieve these goals.
  - d. to stimulate students to see education as a life long process of inquiry and personal growth and to understand that such a view is not in conflict with acceptance of God's truth as revealed in the Bible.
  - e. to encourage students to make decisions, and to develop their personal lifestyle, from a stance of faith in Christ.
  - f. to stimulate the development of a service orientation in lifestyle and vocational choice.
  - g. to help students develop a respect for the rights and opinions of others at all levels of relationships.
  - h. to foster an appreciation of our nation and government while engendering a view of mankind in which the brotherhood of the body of Christ transcends national, cultural, and racial barriers.
  
3. For the intellectual development and academic preparation of students, we aim:
  - a. to promote high academic standards that are consistent with each student's potential.
  - b. to aid each student in acquiring high levels of proficiency in the fundamental communication processes of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
  - c. to offer a curriculum which will adequately prepare students for further education (college, technical/trade school, training) and employment opportunities.
  - d. to develop creative and critical thinking skills including the logical defense of our faith (apologetics).
  - e. to motivate students to pursue independent study in areas of interest and to provide them with the necessary traditional research skills and the use of the internet.
  - f. to develop an awareness and an understanding of man's role in God's creation and of his responsibility to be a good steward of earth's resources.
  - g. to develop an understanding and an appreciation of the fine arts through exposure and participation.

## **II. General Information: Codes and Policies**

### **A. Admissions Policy**

Parents and students who are interested in the objectives and purposes of Belleville Mennonite School are invited to apply for admission. Admission of a student into school means that the parents or guardians automatically become members of the patron body with the responsibilities and rights that go along with such membership.

#### 1. Admissions Procedures

- a. An application must be completed and returned to the Superintendent. In addition, parents must provide a copy of a transfer student's school records.
- b. Prospective parents will be interviewed by the Superintendent and a Board member. If the prospective family had already been accepted as a patron family at an earlier date, had withdrawn their child(ren), then re-enrolled their child(ren) at BMS, this interview may be waived by the Board.
- c. The Board of Trustees after hearing the recommendation of the Admissions Committee will vote on acceptance to the patron body and the school.

#### 2. Admission Requirements – Parents/Guardians

- a. It is expected that at least one parent/guardian be a Christian, that they accept the basic doctrines in the school's Statement of Faith and Biblical Authority and the school's Statement on Sexuality and Marriage and that they agree to support the school in fulfillment of its mission of providing a Christian education within the context of said Statement of Faith and governing Bylaws and Policies.
- b. A commitment of cooperation with the school shall be made by the student and parent.

#### 3. Admission Requirements - Students

- a. Students must demonstrate the capacity to do the course work as evidenced by test scores or other satisfactory evidence. All prospective students in grades K through 12 may be given an entrance test to determine grade placement and to determine if the prospective student fits the educational capabilities of the school.
- b. Students must demonstrate a willingness to abide by school policies and behavior codes.
- c. Transfer students shall have no discipline action, either pending or final, barring them from returning to the school previously attended. The Board of Trustees may refuse to admit a student with severe academic, disciplinary or psychological problems.
- d. Prospective kindergarten students must be five years old by September 1 of the school year.

\*Enrollment is not final until all financial arrangements have been completed. All applicants will be considered regardless of denomination, race or national origin.

## **B. Financial Information**

### 1. Congregational and Private Contributions

Tuition charges meet only 60% of the school's annual operating budget. Since BMS is not a conference or congregational sponsored school, the remainder must be raised from other sources including special fund-raising projects and gifts from individuals, congregations, businesses and other organizations. These gifts might involve the procurement of equipment, renovation of some part of the physical plant, creation or contribution to endowment funds, memorial gifts, bequests in a will or sponsorship of particular activities.

Congregations are encouraged to participate by contributing a fixed amount for each patron family attending from their membership body. Congregations not presently supporting BMS may contact the Director of Development for more information.

All gifts to Belleville Mennonite School are tax deductible.

### 2. Tuition

Tuition payment plans will be handled by FACTS Management Co. The following options are available for payment:

- a. Full payment of tuition directly to the school by April 30 with a 2% discount or by August 20 with a 1% discount.
- b. Payment of tuition directly to the school in two installments due at the beginning of each semester (August 20 and January 20).
- c. A ten or twelve payment option through the FACTS Tuition Payment Plan.
- d. Payments through the FACTS FlexEXTRA traditional invoicing/check payment plan with an automatic payment backup for delinquent payments.

### 3. Late Tuition Payment Policy

- All tuition is considered due by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month
- A Finance Charge of 1.5% per month will be charged for all tuition that is over 30 days past due unless an exception is made through the Overdue Tuition Committee process.
- When tuition is 30 days past due- Families will receive a letter reminding them of their overdue tuition and informing them of the interest to be charged each month.
- When tuition is 60 days past due- Families will receive a letter informing them of that fact and that their account must be brought current by the due date of the subsequent month.
- When tuition is 90 days past due- Families failing to meet the financial obligations stated in the 60 days letter will receive a certified letter informing them of a final date by which their account must be current or their child(ren) will no longer be permitted to attend BMS.
- No student(s) will be permitted to begin the school year if their family has an unpaid tuition balance.
- No student(s) will be permitted to begin the second semester if their family has a tuition balance of greater than thirty (30) days past due.
- Any graduating senior whose family has a past due balance will be permitted to participate in his/her graduation ceremony, however, he/she will receive an empty diploma cover. The actual diploma (and final transcript) will be released when the account has been cleared.
- Any family who has had tuition 90 days or more past due and has a history of late payments under the 1 or 2 tuition payments plan , may be required by Administration to enroll in a FACTS, 10 or 12 month payment plan for the subsequent school year.
- If music lesson fees are more than 30 days past due, families will receive a letter informing them their account must be brought current by the due date of the subsequent month. Any student with music lesson files more than 60 days past due will be withdrawn from the instrumental music program.

Exceptions to these policies must have the approval of the Overdue Tuition Committee (made up of the Superintendent, the Business Manager, and two members of the BMS Finance Committee). The terms of the exception will in be writing and signed the Business Manager and the individual(s) responsible for the account.

### 4. Re-enrollment and Registration Fee

All currently enrolled students will automatically be re-enrolled for the next school year by the Business Office. Patron families will no longer need to re-enroll students through paper or online registration. Patron families not wishing to re-enroll their child must notify the Business Manager on or before March 15 of the current school year or their child will be re-enrolled. A \$10 re-enrollment fee will be charged for each student. The Business Office will perform automatic re-enrollment on or about March 30 of the current school year. The registration fee is not applicable to tuition and is not refundable. Enrollment is not considered complete until this fee has been paid. A registration fee of \$30 will be required for each student who is not enrolled in the current school year.

## 5. Financial Assistance

We believe that a family should not be denied the privilege of sending their children to BMS due to a lack of funds. Various options will be explored with families in need of assistance, including a limited grant-in-aid program. Persons interested in receiving aid should contact the Business Manager or Superintendent for information. A financial statement will usually be required as part of an application for aid.

## 6. Meal Charge Policy

The school meal program at BMS aims to provide nutritious meals and snacks to children during the school day. Children may receive lunch at no charge if they are categorically eligible for free meals or if they qualify for free meals based on Federal guidelines. Children who do not qualify for free meals may purchase meals at either the reduced price (if eligible) or paid rate. All students, K-12, also have the opportunity to purchase a la carte items each day. In an effort to assure that all foods purchased by students are paid for in a timely manner, BMS will follow these guidelines:

- Prepayment of lunches and additional funds for a la carte items will be encouraged through notification to families of the payment options available. These options include online payment and check or cash payment sent in the mail, with a student, or made in person at the school office.
- The point-of-sale system (RenWeb) will be set up to automatically send a daily email notification to a parent or guardian when a student's lunch account balance is below -\$1.00.
- A student will not be refused lunch, regardless of any balance due on their lunch account.
- Parents may place restrictions on their family account which limits a child's spending on a la carte purchases.
- One new lunch card will be given to each student on the first day of school. A second photo lunch card will also be provided after school pictures are taken. If a student loses their lunch card, the cafeteria will replace it once, free of charge. After that, the student's lunch account will be charged \$3.00 for each additional card given.
- If a student has a negative balance for more than a week, he/she will not be permitted to purchase A la Carte items until the balance is paid in full.
- Any communication with students regarding their account balance will be handled with utmost discretion in order to maintain confidentiality. All efforts to communicate with parents or guardians will be done confidentially via email, personal phone calls or sealed letters.

## **C. Attendance Policy**

Attendance rules are established by the State Department of Public Education. BMS must keep accurate records and make attendance reports to the local school districts in which students reside. Enforcement is the responsibility of the public school districts.

### 1. Excused Absences

Pupils may legally be absent because of personal illness, quarantine, impassable roads, death in the immediate family, or other compelling situations directly affecting the child. Advance written requests for excused absences in special cases, such as family trips, religious observances, interviews, college visits, etc., must be submitted to the superintendent at least one week in advance. To be excused, these absences must be approved by the administration.

Parents who are planning to take their child on an educational trip during the time school is in session must complete an educational trip form and have it approved by the administration. Educational trips will be limited to five school days per year. Family trips should include historical, geographical or cultural activities. Students are responsible for work missed and should make arrangements with the teachers at least one week before leaving. Students going on excused educational trips are required to do a daily journal and submit it to their homeroom teacher when they return. Parents are urged to carefully weigh the consequences of lost instructional time. Any such absence extending beyond five days requires board approval and should be requested prior to the monthly board meeting preceding the trip.

After a child accrues 10 days absent due to illness, a doctor's excuse will be required for each absence due to illness thereafter. Exceptions may be made by the principal or the superintendent for lengthy or chronic illnesses.

### 2. Unexcused Absences

Absences of students under the age of 17 resulting from reasons other than those listed above are considered unlawful (illegal, unexcused) according to compulsory attendance regulations. Students under 17 with three days of unexcused absences will be reported to the school authorities of the district in which the student resides. The local school superintendent of that district will serve the parents with a "first notice." This notice informs the parents of the unexcused absences and of their liability for prosecution should further offenses occur. Notices will also be sent home from the BMS office.

Students should make prior arrangements for all work related to unexcused absences.

Seniors quite regularly plan and participate in a "skip day". This activity is not sanctioned by either the Board or Administration, and we do not believe it is conducive to the overall atmosphere at BMS nor to the academic standards to which we adhere.

### 3. Parents' Responsibility

Parents are responsible for exercising whatever reasonable supervision and control is necessary for their child to maintain regular attendance.

#### 4. Returning to School Following Absence

When a student returns to school following an absence he/she should bring to their homeroom teacher a note from the parents stating the reason for the absence. If a note for an absence is not received by the third day after the absence, the absence is considered unexcused.

#### 5. Arriving Late

State law requires that a tardiness record be kept of each student. The elementary school doors will be locked at 8 AM. Parents must accompany their child to the office to sign in. Middle school and high school students may sign themselves in at the office.

A student who reports to the office after 8:00 a.m. is considered tardy. Six unexcused tardies equal a half day unexcused absence. A student who reports after 10:00 a.m. is no longer considered tardy but will be charged for one-half day absence. A student who reports to school after 1:15 p.m. will be charged with a whole day absence.

Student drivers must arrive on time and be present in homeroom by 8:00 AM. After the third unexcused late arrival, student drivers will have their driving privileges revoked for one month. Repeated offenders may have their driving privileges revoked for longer than one month at the discretion of the high school principal or superintendent.

#### 6. Early Dismissal

Any student who needs to leave school early should bring a note from the parents and give it to their homeroom teacher. Any student who leaves before 10:00 a.m. will be recorded as absent for the whole day. A half day absence will be recorded for any student leaving between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. A record will be kept of students leaving school after 2:00 p.m., but no absence will be recorded. Middle School and High School students are required to sign-in at the School Office upon late arrival and sign out before leaving the campus during school hours.

#### 7. Emergency Closings

Emergency school closings will be announced through our RenWeb ParentAlert system.

#### 8. Arriving at School

Students should not arrive at school before 7:45 A.M. unless special arrangements have been made.

#### 9. Riding with Other Persons

Elementary and middle school students who plan to ride home with someone other than their usual means of traveling to and from school must bring a note from their parents. Students are not permitted to ride home on a bus to which they have not been assigned.

#### 10. Staying After School

Elementary and middle students who plan to stay after school for a school activity must bring a signed note from a parent indicating parental permission for such plans. Staying after school is permitted only for activities that begin by 4:00 p.m. No supervision will be provided. BMS is not responsible for your child during this time.

#### 11. Driving and Bus Regulations

Bussing is provided for students in grades K-12 living in Mifflin County School District, Huntington Area School District or Mount Union Area School District. No afternoon bussing is provided for half-day kindergarten students except those living in the Huntington Area School District.

To ensure the safety of children loading or unloading from buses and moving around the parking lots, the following traffic and safety regulations must be followed:

- In the mornings all traffic will enter the grounds by way of the entrance by the soccer field and exit by way of the middle driveway (between the playground and the school sign).
- Parents dropping off or picking up students during the day will use the driveway beside the preschool end of the elementary building and the parking spaces between the buildings. There will be no moving traffic in the main parking lot area during the school day.
- Vehicles may be parked only in designated areas. Student parking is in the row of spaces beside the soccer field. When that becomes filled, the row in front of it may be used. If a student knows he/she will be leaving during the day, he/she must park in the parking area between the buildings.
- Students should leave their cars immediately upon arriving at school and not return to them during the school day without permission.
- All cars must stop for buses or vans loading or unloading children.
- Automobiles must be operated at a reasonable speed and in a safe manner on or near the campus at all times.
- For safety reasons, student drivers are not permitted to transport other students during school-sponsored trips at any time during school hours.
- Students traveling to and from school by bus may use electronic devices including game boys, CD players, headsets, iPods, etc. on the ride to and from school. These items must be used with earphones and may not disturb the bus driver or other bus riders. These items are used at the parent's discretion and neither BMS nor the bus company is responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen devices. These items must be kept in the student's backpack at school.

Operating an automobile is a privilege that carries with it the responsibility of looking out for the safety of others. Administration reserves the right to revoke driving privileges if necessary.

#### 12. Transfer and Withdrawal

Parents should inform the school office if a student intends to withdraw or transfer to another school. Transcripts and academic records can be forwarded to the receiving school only after all financial obligations to Belleville Mennonite School have been met.



## **D. Dress Code**

We believe that appropriately dressed and neatly groomed students increase student morale and positive attitudes throughout the school. The basis for Belleville Mennonite School's policy rests on the following Christian principles. (1) Our bodies are temples of God (I Corinthians 6:18-20), (2) dress should be modest and consistent with a Christian commitment (I Timothy 2:9,10) and (3) clothing choice reflects good stewardship of resources. The following guidelines are a reflection of the standards of the Christian patron body and considered appropriate campus attire.

### 1. Appropriate Attire for All Students

- Clean pants, jeans, or athletic pants without holes.
  - Includes khakis, jeans, jogger pants, wind pants, and sweatpants that are neat/tapered at cuffs – not baggy.
  - Slight frays in jeans are acceptable – no holes, rips, tears, or visible skin permitted.
- Knee-length or mid-thigh length shorts during months designated by administration – nothing shorter than fingertip length on thigh permitted.
  - Shorts not permitted from November 1 – March 31, aside from gym class and sports practices.
- Clean and appropriately sized shirts.
  - Appropriate graphics, words, logos, and designs in-line with Christian values.
- Footwear is to be worn at all times.
- Tattoos must be covered at all times, even during sports and other extra-curricular activities.

### 2. Additional Attire Notes for Girls

- Modest dresses, skirts and split skirts that resemble a full skirt; gauchos and loose fitting capris are acceptable during the designated dates noted above for wearing shorts.
- Leggings may be worn under tops that are mid-thigh length or longer.
- Tops and blouses of sufficient length and neckline that is considered modest during normal movement and activity in the classroom.

### 3. Inappropriate Attire for All Students (Prohibited)

- Piercings, other than earrings and small stud nose piercings, for girls.
- Piercings for boys.
- Midriffs visible during normal movement and activity throughout the school day both in and out of the classroom.
- Sleeveless tops, tank or crop tops, sheer, tight or revealing garments.
- Mid-thigh skirts or dresses (seated or standing) or mini-skirts.
- Shirts with inappropriate graphics, words, logos, or designs.
  - Includes statements of profanity, crude or derogatory statements, jokes, or graphics, and non-Christian bands or TV shows/movies.

#### 4. Policy for Dress Code Violations

- Teachers make note of any violations of the dress code and report it to the school Principal.
- The Principal or designated faculty member will call the parent and notify them of the violation.
- The school will supply the student with a change of attire, if possible. This will be worn until the parent can bring another change of attire that fits the dress code.
- Detention will be issued for repeated violations of the dress code.

Parental controls are to be exercised at home in accordance with these guidelines. The school reserves the right to consider inappropriate any clothing, hair styles or apparel that causes significant distraction or disruption to the learning environment and is not aligned with the Christian values or Biblical teaching at BMS.

#### 5. Parent Helper Attire

Parents participating in school activities (volunteer, classroom helper, field trip chaperone, etc.) are asked to dress according to the dress code.

#### 6. Attire Guidelines for Junior/Senior Banquet

The Principal and/or Guidance Counselor will meet with junior and senior students during the fall of each school year to engage in conversation and review the following guidelines:

If you bring a date from another school, it is your responsibility to make him/her aware of the guidelines for the BMS Junior/Senior Banquet.

Ladies:

- Dresses may have spaghetti straps or be strapless if they fit properly. They should cover all cleavage and be cut above the bust line on the front and sides.
- Dresses may be backless as long as they are not cut below the naval.
- 2-piece dresses must overlap at the waist – meaning that the top *must* overlap with the skirt waistband enough that normal movement is not going to reveal any skin.
- Dresses may have slits that do not exceed mid-thigh (fingertip length).
- Dresses should cover all undergarments, the entire midriff, and be made of material that is not see-through.

Gentlemen:

- Please wear formal attire such as a tasteful tuxedo, dress suit or dress shirt and pants.
- Dress shoes/boots are appropriate; athletic shoes are not permitted.

## **E. Behavior Code**

### 1. Appropriate Conduct - General

Education includes all areas of life, including the development of good manners and courtesy. At Belleville Mennonite School we strive to create an atmosphere that encourages the development of relationships with each other which reflect concern and caring for the dignity of all persons.

It is expected that we all

- seek to develop qualities of Christian character.
- honor the Christian commitments, convictions and standards of others.
- aid one another in spiritual development.

Every person must

- conduct him/herself in accordance with the school's Statement on Sexuality and Marriage.
- respect the authority of all faculty and staff members.
- address faculty by proper titles.
- aid in keeping the school building and grounds neat and clean.
- exercise the social graces of courtesy and consideration.
- respect the property of others.

### 2. Core Values

The core values of Belleville Mennonite School are Integrity, Self-Discipline, Respect, Responsibility, Discipleship, and Service. These values are emphasized across all grade levels and recognized through several special programs: Character Counts (K-5), Star Standout (6-8), and Student of the Month (9-12).

The Character Counts program at Belleville Mennonite School recognizes elementary students for outstanding, consistent displays of character in the classroom and throughout the students' daily interactions with others. Each month, one of the traits, which reflect the school's core values – Trustworthiness, Fairness, Respect, Responsibility, Caring, and Citizenship – is highlighted and teachers nominate a student from their classroom to receive acknowledgement. The recipients are honored and earn a special treat to reward their positive acts of Christ-like service.

The Standout Star Student acknowledges middle school students who demonstrate excellence in various aspects of life. This program also acknowledges students whom teachers see actively growing and improving in differing areas of their academic career. Teachers nominate students each month based upon specific criteria and select a recipient from each class to be honored for the ways in which they reflect Christ and the mission of BMS.

- Integrity: excellence of character - respect, honesty, responsibility, self-discipline, and initiative
- Academics: class participation, self-motivation, great effort, and persistence
- Citizenship: school and community involvement, leadership, service, and positive influence
- Growth: improvement, desire to grow academically, spiritually, and in their relationships with peers and adults in their lives

In high school, the Student of the Month program acknowledges students who consistently demonstrate excellence in various aspects of life. Teachers nominate students each month based upon specific criteria and select one recipient from the high school to be honored for the ways in which they reflect Christ and the mission of BMS.

- Integrity: excellence of character - respect, honesty, responsibility, self-discipline, and initiative
- Academics: class participation, self-motivation, great effort, and persistence
- Citizenship: school and community involvement, leadership, service, and positive influence
- Discipleship: desire to grow and encourage others to become more Christ-like

Additionally, at the conclusion of each year, faculty and administration will select one senior who best represents the core values and mission of BMS to receive the "Student of the Year" award.

### 3. Harassment Policy

Belleville Mennonite School is committed to providing a safe and caring learning environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. The school seeks to follow the commands of Jesus Christ as stated in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 22, verses 37-39. Harassment is a form of discrimination and therefore is unacceptable. For the purposes of this policy, harassment is synonymous with the terms intimidation, bullying, taunting, teasing, and bugging.

Harassment includes behavior which may be verbal, physical, written, or electronic; deliberate, unsolicited or unwelcome; it may be one incident or a series of incidents. The school environment includes the school itself, the school grounds, in school vehicles, or at designated bus stops. Harassment may include:

- verbal abuse or threats;
- negative remarks, jokes, and innuendoes including taunts about a person's body, attire, age, gender, ethnic or national origin, socio-economic status, religion;
- displaying of pornographic, racist or other offensive or derogatory pictures or slogans;
- practical jokes which cause awkwardness, embarrassment or result in negative consequences;
- sexual invitations, request or demands, whether indirect or explicit;
- inappropriate gestures;
- intimidation to participate in unlawful or unethical activity or to participate in activities which contradict school and/or board policy;
- unwelcome physical contact; and/or coercing or influencing third parties to harass others.

Harassment is a major offense and will be dealt with accordingly. Anyone with knowledge of such behavior should report it to the school administration.

### 4. Lunchroom Guidelines

To maintain a pleasant environment the following rules should be followed while in the cafeteria:

- Elementary students will sit at their assigned table.
- Elementary students will wait for the lunchroom supervisor's signal before leaving the cafeteria.

- Elementary students will get permission from the lunchroom supervisor before purchasing extras.
- All students will behave properly in line, use good manners, and clean up their own trash.
- Students will not throw or play with food, yell, move around the room unnecessarily.
- All food must be consumed in the cafeteria.

### 5. Playground Rules

Group cooperation makes playground activities safe and fun. General guidelines are as follows:

- Swings: Do not play under, behind or in front of swings. Do not climb poles. Only one person on a swing at a time. Swing only back and forth.
- Slides: Slide down only in the forward position. Do not climb the poles. One person at a time on the slide; others should wait on the ground until the first child gets to the bottom.
- Only play areas designated by the playground supervisor may be used.
- Baseballs and softballs may not be used at school and should not be brought to school.
- Only inflatable balls may be used in the blacktop area near the building. Balls should not be kicked or thrown against the building.
- Because of problems with maintaining safety, skateboards, roller skates or sleds may not be brought to school.
- If a ball goes across the road, the ball must remain there until the teacher has given permission to retrieve it.

### 6. Policy of Academic Truthfulness

Truthfulness is an essential element of the educational philosophy at Belleville Mennonite School. It is expected that both staff and students model and articulate this quality in all areas of their lives. Truthfulness is expected in all areas including:

#### *a. Homework and Project Completion*

- It is expected that all students will carefully complete his/her own work as the teacher directs.

#### *b. Test Taking*

- All students are expected to carefully complete all tests and assessments to the best of his/her ability. This expectation includes study and preparation, and each student concentrating attention on his/her own work during the test.
- Students will not use any method of cheating including getting advance information about the test, bringing unauthorized materials to the test period, or looking at other student's materials.

#### *c. Research Techniques and Writing practices*

- It is expected that each student will carefully research, take notes, and present his or her findings in a way that respects the original authors and copyrights. Students must give credit for all of the following: another person's idea, opinion, or theory; any facts, statistics, graphs, pictures or drawings that are not "common knowledge"; quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words; a paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.

#### *d. Plagiarism*

Since the arrival of personal computers, the Internet, and the “cut and paste” feature, issues of plagiarism have become more common. According to Joseph Gibaldi, MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing, New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1998: “Derived from the Latin word *plagiarius* (“kidnapper”), plagiarism refers to a form of cheating that has been defined as ‘the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another’s mind, and presenting it as one’s own’ (Alexander Lindey, Plagiarism and Originality, New York: Harper, 1952, 2). To use another person’s ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source is to plagiarize. Plagiarism, then, constitutes intellectual theft and often carries severe penalties, ranging from failure in a course to expulsion from school.”

- **Direct Plagiarism:** This is the direct, intentional copying of material from a source without giving credit. This ranges from copying short sections of text to copying whole papers. This also includes purchasing papers from “Paper Mills”, using another student’s paper, or having someone else write the required paper. This is the most serious level of plagiarism.
- **Sloppy Citation:** This involves any paper with inaccurate or incomplete citations in the text or on the Works Cited page. This includes the use of phrases or a few lines of text without giving proper credit.
- **Patchwork Writing:** Patchwork writing involves patching together someone else’s ideas into a paragraph. This includes their organization, order of information, ideas, phrases, and/or sentences. Merely changing a few words around is not considered adequate; it is still essential to give credit to the source. Patchwork writing also lacks the synthesis of source materials, including one’s own ideas, into the paragraph.

## **F. Discipline Policy**

### 1. Philosophy of Discipline

Discipline in the home and the school is essentially the process whereby adults help children to achieve self-discipline and to develop Godly behavior. Our responsibility as a school is to assist parents in encouraging this internal growth to take place. Firm, fair and consistent discipline is an important part of this process.

We believe that children need to be taught early and often of God's love as well as His justice. We also need to teach respect for God and for God-given authority as well as for oneself and others. Since the Christian school is an extension of the home, the school assumes the responsibility for such teaching and training during the school day.

In all cases where discipline is required, action taken will be aimed at helping the student develop self-discipline and to assume responsibility for his or her behavior.

Both minor and major offenses ( other than those specifically addressing classroom issues) apply to all students at any time they are on the BMS school grounds. This includes but is not limited to school days, practices, sporting events, and other school activities.

### 2. Discipline of Minor Offenses

Minor offenses include but are not limited to interrupting class activities, unnecessary talking, inappropriate language, disturbing study halls, throwing objects indoors, disturbing others, running or yelling in hallways or classrooms, inappropriate conduct in bathrooms or locker rooms, inappropriate physical contact such as pushing, kicking or hitting, inappropriate use of school property including telephones, use of paging devices or cell phones during school hours, disrupting chapel, out of area without permission, inappropriate lunchroom behavior, violation of playground rules, disrespecting the property of others, and arriving late to class. The following actions may be taken in response to minor offenses:

#### *a. Implementation of Classroom Disciplinary Procedures*

The teacher will make the student aware of the offense by simple eye contact, verbal reminder or asking the student to verbalize what he or she is doing. If there is no immediate response, the teacher will proceed with mild disciplinary action and/or arrange to talk with the student after class.

#### *b. Consultation with Parents*

The teacher informs parents by a written note or telephone call. This is to enlist the aid of parents in encouraging the student to develop more positive behavior. At this time a conference between teacher and parents may be called by either party if they feel this would be helpful or appropriate and a written behavior management plan would be agreed upon.

#### *c. Issuing of a Demerit*

Demerits are issued by the classroom teachers or members of the administration and filed by the principal. Parents will be emailed by the principal when demerits are given to their child.

Students will be assigned after-school detention for the third demerit. A detention may be assigned in response to any demerit depending on the severity of the offense. Students who are assigned detentions will be given a form that must be signed by the parent and returned to the principal the next day. Detention will be served the school day after the notice is given, or whenever the student returns to school if they are absent on the assigned day. If the student does not have the signed notification, the office will contact the parents and the detention will be served as assigned.

Detention will be served from 3:05 until 4:00 PM. Students will be assigned work to do during the detention and given the tools and materials needed to complete it. Location and activities assigned to students during detention will be at the discretion of the school principal. Sleeping and socializing will not be permitted. Failure to serve an assigned detention will result in the assignment of an additional detention. Parents are responsible for transportation home after the detention is completed.

Because detentions must be served in a timely fashion, the scheduling of detentions will take precedence over participation in extra-curricular activities.

### 3. Discipline of Major Offenses

Major offenses include but are not limited to insolence or continued disrespect of teacher, harassment of others, any physical contact including fighting, disobedience, cheating, lying, stealing, vandalism, obscenities, lewd or immoral actions, behavior that is not in compliance with the school's Statement on Sexuality and Marriage, use and/or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco in any form, nicotine products, electronic smoking devices, misuse of prescription medications, violation of the school internet/computer use policy, violation of the weapons policy, continued disruptive or other inappropriate behavior, including chronic or accumulated minor offenses. The following actions may be taken in response to major offenses:

#### *a. Demerits/Detention*

The school principal and the superintendent are empowered to assign multiple demerits and/or detentions for any major offense. Parents will be notified in writing when demerits/detentions are assigned.

#### *b. In-School Suspension*

The school principal and superintendent are empowered to assign in-school suspension for any major offense. Parents will be notified immediately when an in-school suspension is assigned. In-school suspension requires the student to work on class assignments in isolation and not be allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activities for that day including practice.



### *c. Out-of-School Suspension*

The school principal and the superintendent are empowered to assign out-of-school suspension for any major offense. Parents will be notified immediately when an out-of-school suspension is assigned and will be required to meet with the school principal at the beginning and ending of the suspension. The student is responsible to complete his/her work at home during the suspension period. A student in OSS is not permitted on school property during the suspension and is not permitted to attend or participate in any school activity on or off the school campus. Should problems continue to go unresolved, the School Board and the Superintendent will be in consultation regarding further action. This may include long-term suspension, probation, expulsion, or some combination of these.

### *d. Expulsion*

The school reserves the right to expel a student for any one major offense or for a series of major offenses. Expulsion must be the result of official action by the Board or its Executive Committee. The student may apply for re-admission after one full school year has passed. Acceptance will be at the discretion of the Board. Behavioral and spiritual counseling are highly recommended to aid the student in lifestyle changes necessary for re-admission.

### *e. Special Consequences for Violations of Academic Truthfulness Policy*

Students who violate the school's Academic Truthfulness policy will be subject to any of the discipline options listed above. In addition, the following consequences may be applied:

1. Reduction in credit, if the student is given the opportunity to redo the assignment
2. A zero for the assignment
3. A failing grade for the course

\*If a student is involved in illegal activity, the school will assign discipline and notify the appropriate authorities and cooperate with them regarding the proper course of action.

## 4. Weapons Policy

It is our intent to provide a safe and secure school environment and to comply with provisions of Act 26 of 1995. Therefore weapons, as described in this policy, are forbidden on school property, in vehicles driven to school by students and parked on or off school property, at school-sponsored activities anywhere, when walking to and from school, at school bus/van stops, and in school busses and vans or other vehicles.

Weapons and replicas of weapons shall include, but are not limited to, firearms; knives (regardless of blade size); metal knuckles; chains; razors; razor blades; explosives; cutting tools; pistols; shotguns; rifles; nunchuks; noxious, irritating or poisonous gases; or any other tool or instrument capable of inflicting bodily injury as determined by school officials.

A violation of the Weapons Ban Policy shall be considered a Major Offense. The superintendent and principal shall review each alleged violation and will exercise discretion for discipline which may include detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension or expulsion.

Should a student realize he/she is accidentally carrying a weapon (for example: a pocket knife in a pocket) he/she may turn in the weapon to a classroom teacher, the principal, or the superintendent without consequence. The parents will be notified and will be required to pick up the weapon at the office.

All acts of violence and possession of weapons shall be reported to parents of the violator and possibly appropriate law enforcement agencies.

A violation of the Weapons Ban Policy and subsequent disciplinary measures shall become part of the violator's permanent student record file.

## **G. Parent Participation**

### 1. Communication

We believe that education is a cooperative venture between the home and the school, and are committed to establishing and maintaining free and clear channels of communication. Several avenues of communication are used by the school including a weekly E-News sent electronically usually every Friday; electronic E-Flashes sent sporadically as special reminders; the *Newsday*, a monthly newsletter sent electronically and available on the school website; parent-teacher conferences; weekly progress reports and/or newsletters sent to parents of elementary students; a quarterly progress report issued to middle school and high school students, and many less formal contacts such as phone calls, notes and emails. Parents are urged to remain in close contact with their child's teachers and with the school administration.

When school problems arise, parents are asked to contact the school persons involved directly, rather than discussing it with others who are not concerned with the problem. Parents who would like to confer with a teacher should contact the teacher in advance to set up a mutually convenient time. Parents are welcome to visit classes with prior notice to the teacher.

### 2. Resolution of Grievances

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for settling complaints or misunderstandings that involve members of the school community. The complaints may involve

- only employees
- employees including the superintendent
- employees and board members
- employees and patrons.

It is urged that an honest attempt be made by the parties to settle the complaint before involving the administration and/or the board. This is in accordance with Colossians 3:13 "*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.*" (NIV). This policy also incorporates the principles of Matthew 18:15-17 in the resolution of grievances. Both Christian and professional ethics make imperative the handling of grievances in the methods prescribed, rather than openly and publicly airing them.

If an attempt to settle the complaint fails, complaints shall be handled as follows:

The complaint, regardless of the parties involved, shall be referred to the superintendent for an initial decision. Thus, employees, board members and patrons are all expected to bring their complaints to the attention of the superintendent (even if the complaint involves the superintendent), before involving the board. The superintendent shall provide a timely decision. If the complaint involves the superintendent, the superintendent must defer to the board for a decision.

- Any decision made by the superintendent may be appealed by any directly affected party to the board.
- Any party may also appeal to the board if the superintendent fails to make a decision within a reasonable period of time. Written notice of the appeal shall be given to any officer of the board, but preferably the Chair. The notice shall briefly explain the problem and what action, if any, that the party would like the board to take. The board shall take such steps as may be appropriate to obtain the views of the involved parties and the superintendent, and shall promptly issue a final decision.

### 3. Visiting the School

Visiting students and other guests must register at the office and receive a visitor's pass before being permitted to visit classrooms or be in the halls. All school visitors are expected to conform to general school policies.

To avoid conflicts with testing, field trips, etc., any parents who wish to observe a classroom will contact the teacher of their child (at least forty-eight hours in advance) and arrange for a date and time of day for the visit. Parents and teachers should discuss the particular objectives of the observation, review the teacher's guidelines for the parent and agree on the length of observation. (Observation is to be limited to one hour unless otherwise arranged.)

### 4. Volunteering

There are many ways in which parents participate in the operation of the school. Not only does this help control costs but it is also a source of blessing for those who become involved in this way. It is each parent's responsibility to involve themselves in our volunteer program in some way. Please see the Volunteer Handbook for a description of the many volunteer opportunities available.

### 5. Parent Fellowship Meetings

Parent Fellowship Meetings are scheduled three times throughout the school year to cultivate relationships and communication between parents, teachers and administration. The annual business meeting of the school will take place during the October meeting. Reports are presented by the Board of Trustees, the various subcommittees of the board, and the school administration. The budget for the past year is reviewed and the proposed budget for the upcoming year is presented for approval. Parents also accept or reject proposed changes in the constitution or by-laws. Participation of all parents in these meetings is strongly encouraged.

## **H. Medical Issues**

### 1. Health Service

BMS receives nursing services from the school nurse provided by the Mifflin County School System. All students in kindergarten, sixth, and eleventh grades are required to have a physical examination by their family doctor. Dental exams are required for all students entering kindergarten, third, and seventh grades. The required forms can be obtained at the school office. Other tests are administered at the direction of the school.

### 2. Immunizations Regulations

In August 2017 the Department of Health changed school immunizations regulations. The regulations are intended to ensure that children attending school in the commonwealth are adequately protected against potential outbreak of vaccine preventable diseases.

All immunizations must be on file and up to date by the start of the school year or your child may not be permitted to start school. If your child is behind schedule on immunizations, a medical certificate signed by the child's physician must be provided setting out the schedule for the remaining doses.

A child may still obtain a medical, religious, or philosophical/strong moral or ethical conviction exemption from meeting the immunization requirements.

### 3. Medications

All prescription medications taken by students on a regular basis including inhalers, etc. must have a signed form from the doctor. Medications must be in the original container showing the type of medication, doctor's name and dosage. A written note signed by the parent must accompany the medication. Non-prescription medications brought to school by the students must also be in the original container accompanied by a note signed by the parent with reason and dosage.

### 4. Returning to School after Illness

Parents are encouraged to keep a child home from school if he/she has a fever, has been vomiting, has diarrhea, complains of earache or sore throat, has a persistent cough, or has pink eye. Parents will be contacted to pick up their child for any of the following reasons: vomiting, diarrhea, temperature 100 degrees or greater, lice, potential communicable diseases (chicken pox, measles, mumps, pink eye, or strep throat.) When students are absent from school because of illness they may not return to school until they are fever-free without medication for 24 hours.

Parents must notify the school of any kind of contagious disease/health issue such as chicken pox, measles, mumps, pink eye, or lice. This information is confidential. The school has an obligation to inform teachers/staff/school families of potential outbreaks of diseases that can be passed from person to person.

After a child accrues 10 days absent due to illness, a doctor's excuse will be required for each absence due to illness thereafter. Exceptions may be made by the principal of the superintendent for lengthy or chronic illnesses.

### 5. Insurance

All participants in interscholastic sports are required to have insurance. Forms will be provided at the beginning of the school year.

BMS carries no medical or accident coverage as a school for injuries obtained during any athletic activities (organized games, gym classes, recesses, etc.) Participants involved in these activities do so at their own risk.

### **III. Academic Information**

#### **A. General**

##### 1. Grading System

The following letter grades are used for most classes in grades 1-12:

A - Excellent	93 - 100
B - Above Average	85 - 92
C - Average	77 - 84
D - Below Average	70 - 76
F - Not Passing	Below 70
I - Incomplete	

##### 2. Report Cards

The school year is divided into four quarters, each of which represents a grading period. Report cards are issued shortly after the close of each quarter. These reports evaluate the student's academic achievement; therefore, they should be examined by the parent or guardian and discussed with the student. They are to be signed and returned to school as soon as possible.

##### 3. Honor Roll

Students who receive a 3.25-3.79 during a quarter will be given Honor Roll recognition. Those who receive a 3.8 and above are given Distinguished Honors recognition. These lists are posted on the bulletin board and are published in the local papers.

##### 4. RenWeb

Teachers of core classes in grades 3-12 use an internet-based grade reporting system called RenWeb. Parents and students may access grades throughout the year through this system. Teachers are required to update RenWeb at the end of each school week.

#### **B. Elementary**

##### 1. General Curriculum

Bible, English, reading, handwriting, math, spelling, social studies, health, science, music, physical education, and art are taught in the elementary grades. There is a strong emphasis on the mastery of skills.

##### 2. Homework

Homework assignments will vary somewhat depending on each teacher's program. Homework is given to reinforce specific concepts or to enrich the academic program. The average amount of time spent on homework assignments may vary from perhaps 10 minutes in the lower grades to as much as an hour or more in the upper grades. Some study time is usually made available during the school day, thus the amount of homework a given child has may vary depending on how well he or she uses the time in school.

### 3. Make-up Work

It is important that make-up work be completed as soon as possible after the student returns to school. Make-up work may sometimes need to be done at recess time, after school, at home, or other times at the discretion of the teacher.

### 4. Promotion Policy

Students who receive a grade of less than 70% in reading or math may be retained. The teacher(s) and principal will determine grade placement for the next year.

## **C. Middle School/High School**

### 1. Graduation Requirements

#### *a. Course Credits*

A minimum of 24 credits is required for graduation. The following graduation credit requirements are for students attending Belleville Mennonite School for four years of high school. All transfer students should check with the principal or guidance counselor for deviations from these requirements.

English	4.0
Social Studies	4.0
Mathematics	3.0
Science	3.0
Foreign Language	1.0
Computer	0.8
Bible	1.6
Physical Education	1.6
Foundation Studies	0.6
Electives	4.4

#### *b. Service Hours*

High school students are required to perform a minimum of ten hours of service each year, either at school or in the community. Students enrolling at BMS during the school year will be required to complete a pro-rated number of service hours depending on their enrollment date.

Service hours must be completed by the last day of school for students in grades 9-11. Students who fail to complete their service hours during the year must attend school on the Teacher Work Day at the end of the year and complete the work hours at school under the supervision of his/her class advisor. If a student does not have at least 7.5 service hours completed by the end of the third marking period, that student will miss privileged trips during the fourth marking period until ten service hours are completed. If a student fails to complete his/her service hours on the Teacher Work Day, a notation will be made on the student's transcript that service hours were not completed, and any outstanding service hours will carry over to the next year for non-seniors.

All service hour documentation must be completed and turned into the homeroom teacher by the end of the marking period in which the service is done. Service hours done during the summer (VBS, church mission trips, etc.) must be documented and turned in by the end of the first

marking period. Service hours done during the last month of school (grades 9 – 11) must be documented and turned into the homeroom teacher by the last day of school.

Seniors must complete their service hours by May 1 to participate in the Senior Trip.

Students who complete a minimum of 25 service hours per year will be eligible for the Christian Servant Recognition Award to be given at the end of the senior year.

Activities for which a student will NOT receive approval include, but are not limited to the following: political campaigning, services which are required activities for a class or school group (such as National Honor Society), services performed for a family member, fundraisers that benefit you (class, youth group, etc.), service performed for money, and activities that are more social than service oriented.

## 2. Promotion Policy – Middle School

Middle school students must pass Bible and at least three major subjects each year to be promoted to the next grade.

## 3. Promotion Policy – High School

In order to be officially classified as a member of a class, students shall meet the minimum requirements as outlined below:

Grade 9 - Successful completion of grade 8.

Grade 10 - Six credits including English 9 and Bible 9.

Grade 11 - Twelve credits including English 10 and Bible 10.

Grade 12 - Eighteen credits including English 11 and Bible 11.

Exceptions to these guidelines must be approved by the administration. Any required courses which are failed must be made up prior to promotion. See Guidance Counselor for more information.

## 4. Make-up Work and Late Work

Whenever possible students who will be absent from school, including absences from class for sports events and other school functions shall make prior arrangements with the teachers concerning assignments and other make-up work. Assignments for classes missed due to choir, sports events, or field trips are due on time. Assignments due on the day of the absence need to be turned in to the teacher before the student leaves.

When it is impossible to make prior arrangements for an excused absence the student is responsible to make arrangements regarding make-up work upon returning to school. In such cases the student will have one day for each day missed to get work made up, unless other arrangements have been made with the teacher(s) involved.

If a student fails to make proper arrangements for make-up work, or if work is submitted late, the grade for the completed work will be reduced by at least ten percent. The actual amount of credit given for such work will be at the discretion of the teacher. It is the responsibility of each teacher to clearly explain his or her policy for late work to the students at the beginning of the school year.



## 5. Online Courses

Online courses are available to junior and senior students. (Freshmen and sophomore students may be granted permission to take an online course by the guidance counselor.) Students who enroll in an online course will be charged the cost of the course. (Check with guidance counselor for the enrollment due date.)

## 6. Advanced Learning Options

Honors courses taught at BMS include:

- Honors English
- Honors History

BMS also offers dual enrollment college courses through Juniata College, Liberty University Online Academy, Harrisburg Area Community College and other colleges and universities.

## 7. Eligibility

### *a. Eligibility Requirements*

To be eligible for interscholastic athletic competition and extra-curricular activities, a student must meet all of the following academic requirements:

- The student must pursue a curriculum defined and approved by the principal as a full-time curriculum.
- The student must be passing Bible class as well as each of the following core courses with a grade of at least 70%: one full credit Mathematics course, one full credit English course, one full credit Science course, and one full credit Social Studies course. Students who have substituted another course for a core course with the approval of the guidance counselor must be passing the substituted course as well as the other core courses.
- The student must be passing a minimum of five aggregate credit hours of course work.

### *b. Determining Eligibility*

The following procedure will be followed for determining eligibility:

- For the purpose of determining eligibility for the following week, the guidance counselor will determine student grades on Thursday morning and post the names of all students who are failing a high school course to the database of currently failing students.
- The principal will review the database of currently failing students and individual student schedules to determine eligibility. (During the first three weeks of a quarter, the principal will consider that grades may be skewed based on a limited number of assignments given.) The principal will notify the athletic director of ineligible students by noon on Friday. The athletic director will notify coaches of any ineligible players on their team.
- The administration will notify ineligible students by the end of school on Friday.

### *c. Ineligibility Guidelines*

Students who are declared ineligible for interscholastic athletic competition will be ineligible for one week, from Sunday through Saturday inclusive. Students declared ineligible are not permitted to travel with the team to away games or participate in any games or team scrimmages.

Students will be permitted to practice with the team during the first week of ineligibility.

However, if a student's grades do not improve to the point which they become eligible at the end of the first week, they will no longer be permitted to practice with their team.

#### *d. Long-term Ineligibility*

Students who have not met the eligibility requirements listed in section a at the end of a quarter will be declared ineligible. After fifteen school days in the quarter of ineligibility, a student may be declared eligible if they meet the following criteria:

- The student meets all of the eligibility requirements listed in section of this policy.
- The student has raised their grade in any course in which they received a failing grade to a level that, when averaged with the failing grade of the previous quarter, would produce an average equal to a passing grade for the course.

If a student fails to meet these requirements after fifteen school days, their status will be reviewed on a weekly basis until they meet the eligibility requirements and are reinstated.

#### 8. Work Release Program

The purpose of the Work Release Program is to afford students the opportunity to gain additional experience and training in jobs that might lead to a future career. The following principles govern the Work Release Program:

1. The program is open to those students who are at least 17 years of age.
2. Application to the program will be made on a semester basis. Participation in the program during one semester does not guarantee automatic permission to continue in subsequent semesters. Students may enter the program at the beginning of the semester only. Application forms are available in the school office.
3. Students will be dismissed from periods 7 and/or 8 only. These periods must be scheduled as study halls.
4. The student will not participate in the program on days when his/her presence is needed at a school activity, such as a pep rally, class-related activity, etc.
5. The student must maintain at least a C average, based on marking period grades. The student may not have any grade lower than a C on any marking period report card. The student will be ineligible to participate in the Work Release Program if the grade requirements are not maintained.
6. There will be no course credit given for participation in the Work Release Program.
7. Transportation is the responsibility of the student and his/her family. A liability waiver will be required.
8. The student must leave the school grounds without disrupting the rest of the students and classes. He/she must sign out in the office every day.
9. The student must meet with the principal or the guidance counselor on a monthly basis to discuss the skills he/she is learning and how this experience is valuable to the student in making future career decisions.

#### 9. Student Emergency Responder Program

We value the contribution of our community's volunteer fire department and ambulance service. We also support our students in becoming members of these organizations. The following principles govern the answering of emergency calls during school hours:

1. Students wearing pagers and answering emergency calls must be certified responders for either the fire department or the ambulance service.
2. Emergency pagers may not be turned on during core courses.
3. Students may not respond to an emergency event during core courses.

4. Students must sign out at the office before leaving school grounds.
5. If students respond to an emergency call in the morning are late for school, they must bring in a signed excuse from a parents on the following day for the absence to be excused.
6. Students responding to calls during elective classes are responsible for obtaining any work they missed while on a call.
7. Student responders must be passing all subjects and must maintain at least a C average overall, based on marking period grades. Students are not permitted to leave school to respond to emergency events if the grade requirements are not maintained.
8. Students responders must have a signed parent permission form on file at the school before they will be permitted to respond to emergency calls

## **IV. Student Activities**

### **A. General**

#### 1. Field Trips

Field trips may be taken several times during the school year. They will generally be off-campus experiences related to the classroom curriculum. A permission slip explaining the objectives of the trip is sent to each parent. Each signed slip must be returned at least one day before the trip. Classroom teachers may invite parents with necessary clearances to serve as chaperones.

For safety reasons, student drivers may NOT transport other students during trips.

#### 2. Musical Programs

Elementary students, middle school choir students, and high school choir students perform in special music and drama programs at Christmas and in the spring of each year. The annual Christmas program, the spring elementary musical, and the spring choir concert are high points of the year.

#### 3. Drama

Each year the middle school and the high school present dramatic productions. Additional opportunities for students to perform are available through other smaller productions that may be presented from time to time.

#### 4. Athletics

Middle school and high school students have the opportunity to participate in soccer and basketball at BMS.

#### 5. Chapel

Elementary students participate in a music worship service once a week and attend a chapel one time a month. Middle school and high school students attend chapel three times per week. Chapel activities include special speakers, student led worship, and student led care groups. Chapel experiences are planned by the guidance counselor and administration and are intended to be a time for worship, personal growth, spiritual sharing between students and faculty; and to provide opportunity to gain experience in leading such activities. Chapel is required of all students.

#### 6. Private Music Lessons

Private instruction in piano, guitar, voice and other instruments is available to students at parent expense. Music lessons are offered during the regular school day, before school, and after school. Students must have teacher approval to schedule a music lesson during a class and are responsible to make up any class work they may have missed. Students taking private lessons will be expected to participate in an annual recital arranged by the instructor.

## **B. High School**

### 1. Clubs

To broaden and enrich student experiences at Belleville Mennonite, opportunity may be provided for participation in various club activities. Whether or not a given club is organized during a particular year will depend on student interest and the availability of a faculty or other administratively approved sponsor. New clubs may be formed if they meet the following criteria; (a) There must be sufficient student interest. (b) The objectives and organization must be satisfactorily stated. (c) A faculty member or other approved adult must consent to serve as advisor. (d) It must be approved by the administration.

### 2. Student Government

Each class will be organized with a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer elected by the class. A class officer who fails to fill his office responsibility shall be removed from office.

The Student Senate consists of students in grades 9 – 12. The purpose of the Senate is to organize student activities, address itself to issues before the school community, promote enthusiastic school spirit, and to provide opportunities for the development of leadership abilities.

### 3. Junior-Senior Banquet

The junior class is responsible for planning the Junior-Senior Banquet, which is held each spring. The following guidelines have been established:

- The cost of the banquet should be in keeping with good Christian stewardship. Not more than \$2000.00 should be spent on the banquet. This figure will be reviewed periodically due to inflation.
- The banquet should be held at a place consistent with the policies and witness of Belleville Mennonite School.
- Decoration guidelines are as follows:
  1. Decorating should in no way disfigure or damage any surface. No water, soil or sand is to be used without written permission from location owner.
  2. The decorations should be removed by Saturday afternoon, unless otherwise stated by location owner.
  3. The school cafeteria and/or gymnasium will be available from Wednesday afternoon at 3:00pm for decoration and preparation.
- All class advisors should be invited to the banquet, or all high school teachers should be invited, at the discretion of the junior class.
- All plans are to be approved by the class advisor and the school administrator.
- Participation in the banquet shall be limited to members of the junior class, senior class, and invited guests. Students under grade 10 are not eligible to be guests.
- Students attending the banquet will be excused from school before high school lunch period on the day of the banquet.

#### 4. Senior Class Trip

The senior class at Belleville Mennonite School does take a trip each year also known as the senior trip. Students are encouraged to plan a worthwhile, affordable trip that wisely uses God's resources and abides by the following guidelines:

- A maximum of five days total, with a three-day limit on the number of school days taken.
- A full day of the trip (not the first or last day) must be set aside for meaningful service in or near the community in which the senior trip takes place. A full day is designated as a minimum of eight continuous hours.
- If the trip takes place over a Sunday, the group must attend a local in-person church service.
- The group must take part in a meaningful cultural or educational activity during the trip.
- The costs of the trip (transportation, lodging, meals, and activities) will be paid for with money the class obtains through fundraising or other means. Students are responsible for any other spending money.
- Two chaperones must be approved by Administration.
- Students, advisors, and chaperones must keep in mind that the trip is a school activity and all participants are expected to use good judgment regarding appropriate behavior, dress, and activities.
- The destination of the trip should be chosen with the guidelines in mind, and the High School Principal must be consulted throughout the planning process.
- Preliminary plans for the trip must meet with the approval of the High School Principal, the Superintendent, and the Board.

#### 5. National Honor Society

The Belleville Mennonite School Chapter of the National Honor Society is one of 21,000 chapters belonging to the national organization. Members are selected from junior and senior applicants by a panel of faculty based on the four pillars of the national organization: scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Members must also agree to the specific expectations of the local chapter at BMS.

Members must demonstrate scholarship by maintaining a 3.50 GPA while following a full academic curriculum:

- Algebra I and II, geometry, plus advanced math, accounting, business math, or calculus
- Earth science, biology, chemistry, and physics or an equivalent (AP or college level)
- 4 years of English and history
- 2 years of foreign language
- 2 honors course each year in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade

Members demonstrate leadership as resourceful and dependable problem-solvers who contribute ideas and demonstrate the ability to influence others in a positive way. Members must hold a responsible position each year. For example:

- |               |                     |                             |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Class officer | Youth group officer | Care group leader/assistant |
| 4-H officer   | Yearbook editor     | Student Senate member       |
| Team captain  | Worship team leader |                             |

Members must be involved in some major extra-curricular activity at school:

Sports	Play	Worship team
Choir	Yearbook	Senate

Members demonstrate service by doing volunteer work in the school, church, or community with a positive, courteous, and enthusiastic spirit. Members are encouraged to have an on-going, weekly service situation. This could be tutoring another student, helping in an elementary classroom, or some other situation outside of school such as regularly volunteering in a library, hospital, home for the aged, Thrift Shop, etc. Members must complete 25 individual hours of service each school year and participate in the selected service projects selected by the group. Applicants should have demonstrated a commitment to service by striving to complete at least 25 hours of service during both the freshman and sophomore years. If senior honor society members do not meet the service requirements, they will not wear the honor society cords at graduation.

Members demonstrate good character by having high principles of morality and ethics, such as honesty and reliability, courtesy, concern, and respect for others. Members must, in addition, demonstrate commitment to Christ, be actively involved in their home churches, and demonstrate appreciation for BMS and respect for the rules and expectations expressed in the handbook without requiring reminders for clarifications.

Interested students must complete an application (at the end of their sophomore or junior year) and obtain a letter of reference from their (youth) pastor or youth group advisor. A faculty panel then evaluates the applications and the students are notified of the faculty decision by letter at the beginning of the new school year.

All members are expected to maintain high levels of citizenship in each of the above areas. Members of the society who, in the opinions of the faculty, do not live up to these standards will be subject to disciplinary measures. Dismissal from the society may be a result of disciplinary action.

#### 6. School Publications

*Kish-O-Vale*, the yearbook, is published in August. A student editor, under faculty direction, is responsible for its production.

## **V. Student Services**

### **A. Guidance**

A guidance counselor is provided to help students with educational and vocational concerns. The guidance counselor assists students with course scheduling, registering for college board examinations, and fulfilling college admissions requirements. In addition, the guidance counselor schedules representatives from various colleges to visit BMS each year.

In addition field trips are planned for sophomores and juniors to school such as South Hills School of Business and Technology and Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology. Juniors and seniors are required to schedule meetings with the guidance counselor to discuss their post-high options and decisions.

### **B. Transcripts**

Transcripts will be sent to colleges or other institutions at no charge while a student is enrolled at BMS. After graduation two (2) copies will be sent at no charge. Any additional copies will be sent at the cost of \$5 each.

Transcripts will not be released for any student until the tuition account has been cleared.

### **C. Standardized Testing**

- IOWA assessments are administered annually to students in grade K-10.
- The PSAT/NMSQT is administered to students in grades 10 and 11.

### **D. College Board Examinations**

The SAT and the ACT are administered at designated times at several locations in the general area. Information and assistance in registering for these tests may be obtained from the guidance office

### **E. Library**

When using the library each student is expected to maintain an atmosphere of quietness conducive to good study. The following guidelines apply to library use:

- Books may be borrowed for a period of four weeks and may be renewed at the end of that time unless they are in demand by other students.
- All borrowed materials and books are to be left at the desk when they are returned.
- Reference books and periodicals are to be used only in the library or checked out overnight.
- A fine of \$.05 per school day will be charged for overdue books.
- The borrower is held responsible for the loss or damage of any material.



## **F. Cell Phone, Computer and Internet Policy**

### 1. Cell Phone Use

- Cell phones and any electronic devices, apart from school-issued devices, must be kept in lockers and turned off or silent. This is to decrease distractions, disruptions, and inappropriate use during school hours. Students may use cell phones for academic purposes if teacher directed (ie. photography). Messages to parents/guardians may be sent in/near the office with permission. The student phone is available in the office as needed.

### 2. Computer Use

- Students have use of school owned desktops, Chromebooks, and iPads. Use of these computers are for school related purposes.
- Students taking online classes may use personal devices on a case by case basis and with permission by Guidance Counselor and Director of Technology.
- Students in grades 6-12 are given a USERNAME and PASSWORD for use with the school's network. As requested by teachers, these are provided for younger grades as well. Students have access to a shared network drive for limited sharing. Students are encouraged to use their GSuite drive.
- Students are expected to treat their passwords as private information. Passwords are assigned at the beginning of each school year and in cases of lost passwords, passwords are able to be reset through contacting the Director of Technology.
- Students are expected to respectfully use the computers resulting in minimal usage and wear.

### 3. Internet Use

- Students have access to Internet resources with appropriate supervision of BMS staff.
- Students in grades 3-12 are given a GSuite account for school use. Students do not have access to GMail. Use of GSuite account is only for school use and when a student is no longer enrolled, their account is suspended.
- Students in grades 6-12 are given their own account to access grades as well as scheduling information through FACTS SIS. These accounts are in addition to the parent accounts that are given at the beginning of each school year. Parents are able to access billing related information through their account which is not available through the child's account.
- All student use of the Internet must be in support of education and research and must be consistent with the purposes/philosophy of Belleville Mennonite School.
- The Internet connection will not be used for illegal activity, profit purposes, non-school-related activities, lobbying, advertising, transmitting offensive materials or to obtaining obscene or pornographic material.
- Filtering software has been installed by the school to restrict access to inappropriate materials and activities. In the event a website "slip through", it is the responsibility of the student to immediately inform the teacher and appropriate action will be taken to block the site.
- Because of the limited bandwidth, students are expected to only access educationally appropriate Internet resources.

- Students should never reveal personal addresses or phone numbers on the Internet through the school connection. Student use of the school's technology resources should follow copyright laws and guidelines. Plagiarism is not permitted.
- Issues not addressed in this policy will be considered on an individual basis.
- BMS staff will educate all students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals through social networking, online gaming, chat rooms, and awareness of and responses to cyber-bullying.

Failure to follow this policy may result in the loss of the right to use computer resources and Internet access. Belleville Mennonite School reserves the right to log, monitor, and evaluate all network and Internet activity.

## **G. Wellness Policy**

Belleville Mennonite School recognizes that providing healthy and nourishing foods and appropriate physical activity for students promotes student attendance, education and achievement, and lifelong healthy habits. Therefore, BMS expresses its commitment to maintaining school environments that promote and protect student health by providing appropriate nutrition education, physical education, a variety of healthy food and beverage choices and encouraging all BMS employees to model healthy behaviors.

In support of the mission statement, BMS adopts the following goals.

- The school will establish a Wellness Committee comprised of, but not necessarily limited to at least one (1) of each of the following: School Board member, administrator, food service representative, student, parent/guardian, school health professional, physical education teacher and member of the public.
- All students in grades K through 12 will have opportunities, support and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Food service workers will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of the student body.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- To the maximum extent practicable, our school will participate in available federal school meal programs.
- BMS will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity.

The Wellness Committee shall serve as an advisory committee regarding student health issues and shall be responsible for developing, implementing and periodically reviewing and updating a School Wellness policy that complies with law to recommend to the Board for adoption.

Belleville Mennonite School shall annually inform and update the public, including parents/guardians, students and others in the community, about the contents, updates and implementation of this policy via the school website and newsletters. This annual notification

shall include information on how to access the School Wellness policy; information about the most recent triennial assessment; information on how to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the School Wellness policy; and a means of contacting Wellness Committee leadership.

## **Nutritional Quality of Food and Beverages Sold and Served On Campus**

### **School Meals**

Free and reduced meals will be offered to all families who qualify. Students will not be able in any way to identify what type of lunch another student receives.

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program will:

- be appealing and attractive to children
- be served in clean and friendly environment
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables
- serve only low fat (1%) milk

There shall be no food brought into the school for lunch that is in competition with school-provided lunches, except for a packed lunch brought to school by an individual for his/her own consumption. Students may not bring snack food to share with others that does not comply with the wellness policy.

The Cafeteria staff of BMS will involve students and parents in the lunch program by:

- using parent volunteers whenever possible in the preparation and serving of school meals
- making taste tests available to students of new nutritional foods
- providing surveys to students and parents about school foods at least one time during the school year

### **Meal times and Scheduling**

- Students will have at least 20 minutes to eat after sitting down for lunch.
- Lunch will be scheduled between 11 AM and 1 PM for all students.
- Tutoring, club or organizational meetings or activities will not be scheduled during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities.
- Reasonable steps will be taken to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimes of students with special oral health needs (orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

### **Water**

To promote hydration, free, safe drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day. The Café will make cups available during mealtimes. In addition, students will be allowed to bring water bottles to the classroom.

### **A la carte Foods**

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages sold outside of school meal programs during the school day (12:00 am – 3:30 pm) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all

locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, a la carte options in the Café, vending machines and snack or food carts.

### **Fundraising**

BMS will only use foods, beverages and non-food items designed for delivery or consumption after school hours as fundraisers.

### **School-sponsored Events**

School activities, athletic and academic functions, etc. that occur after the school day (3:30pm) are not covered by this policy. Food and beverages offered at these functions should include some healthy choices.

A packed lunch can be provided by the cafeteria for all field trips. Teachers must always give the students the option of a lunch from the Café.

### **Celebrations and Rewards**

- Snacks and birthday treats brought to the classroom should make a positive contribution to children's health. The school will provide a list of healthy snack items to teachers and parents, including non-food celebration ideas.
- Teachers will ensure that food allergies of any participants are known before serving any food item.
- Soda may not be served during the school day.
- School staff should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than four times per class per year. These celebrations should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for food and beverages served or sold on campus.
- Food and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld from students as a consequence for inappropriate behavior or poor academic performance.

### **Recommendations for Snack Foods**

- Fruit smoothies
- Fresh fruit & vegetables
- Yogurt, yogurt parfaits
- Trail mix
- String cheese
- Fig cookies
- Whole grain crackers or pretzels
- Whole grain soft pretzels
- Plain popcorn
- Fruit snacks (with 100% juice or fruit as the first ingredient)
- Pudding
- Graham crackers
- Baked chips

## **Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education**

### Weekly Physical Education

All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs and in alternative educational settings, will receive physical education twice a week, totaling 60 minutes a week for elementary students and 90 minutes a week for middle and high school students, for the entire school year. All physical education will be taught by a teacher certified in education. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g. interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50% of physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50% of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity

### Daily Recess

All students in Grades K-3 will have at least 45 minutes a day and students in grades 4-5 at least 30 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which staff will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. Partial school days are exempt from this criteria.

### Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

Middle and high school students will be offered extra-curricular physical activities, such as interscholastic sports programs. These activities will be offered to all middle and high school students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities and students with special health care needs.

### Physical Activity and Punishment

Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use extreme physical activity (e.g. running laps, pushups) as punishment. Physical Education classes will not be withheld from any student as punishment.

### Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours

School spaces and facilities will be available to students, staff and community members before and after the school day, on weekends and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities will be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

## **Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing**

### Communication with Parents

Belleville Mennonite School will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. BMS will send home nutrition information and post nutrition tips on the school website. BMS will encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the nutrition standards mentioned. The school will provide parents with a list of foods that meet the snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations, parties, rewards and fundraising activities.

BMS will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during and after the school day and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such support will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a newsletter, handbook, or other take home materials, or special events.

### Food Marketing in Schools

School based marketing will be consistent with nutritional education and health promotion. As such, schools will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually. School based marketing of brands promoting low-nutrition foods and beverages are prohibited. (Advertising of low-nutrition foods and beverages is permitted in supplementary classroom and library materials, such as newspapers, magazines, the Internet and similar media when such materials are used in a class lesson or activity, or as a research tool). The promotion of healthy foods, including fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

### Staff Wellness

Belleville Mennonite School highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and supports their personal efforts to maintain a healthy lifestyle. School staff is encouraged to model healthy eating behaviors. Any food or beverage that does not meet the above guidelines will not be consumed in front of the students. The teacher's lounge will be exempt from this ruling.

BELLEVILLE MENNONITE SCHOOL  
provides a Christ-centered education and  
Biblical worldview that inspires students to  
develop minds, build faith, and be disciples.