

Hello, TMI!

It's been two weeks and it's time for another update as we prepare to welcome you back to campus on August 20th. I want to say that these two weeks have flown by as our faculty and staff have been really busy preparing for next school year. As we get closer to August 20th, I will share more and more details about what next year will look like. You are asking great questions. We are getting phone calls and emails to the Admissions Office, in the Business Office, and to myself. You're all asking great questions about what school will look like next year and I hope that this video will begin to answer some of those questions. So, please watch this video. I know your time is precious; we'll try not to waste it. We want to give you great updates with more specifics about what next school year will look like.

I have to remind you to stay flexible, to adapt, to continue to remember that this is a changing situation and we have to expect the unexpected. But, I will remind you again that everything we are doing is in preparation for you to be back in school on August the 20th on this campus. It may look different, but I'm telling you, we're trying to get back to this campus on August the 20th. Many of the questions that I've heard come our way in the last couple of weeks have been academic questions. What will academics look like if we're on campus? What will academics look like if we have to go to a hybrid schedule? And, what will academics look like if we have to go to remote instruction? It is for that reason that I invited Rob Friedrich, our chair of the Academic Response Team, to share with you some updates from his team on the things they're working on to prepare us for academics this coming school year.

Thank you, Father Scott. I'm excited to share with you some of the results of the work of our Academic Response Team over the past few months. This is a group of faculty and staff that never took a break over the summer. They just kept working and that's because they want to make sure that when we return to school at TMI, it *looks* like school at TMI. So over the past few months, our team's been making a lot of progress on looking at the details of what school is going to look like and how we can make that happen.

I know some people are wondering if we can even have a normal school schedule while taking into account all the rules we have to follow for safety and for social distancing. I've been worried about that myself. Well, we're really fortunate. TMI has very small classes, a relatively small student population, and we've got a pretty big campus. So that means we have flexibility that a lot of other schools don't have. Our Academic Response Team has gone through and evaluated,

checked, and measured every space that we use for teaching and a lot of spaces that we normally wouldn't use for teaching.

Here's the good news. The good news is that we can maintain all those rules for social distancing and be in our classrooms with only some modifications to our normal daily schedule. So what does a modified normal daily schedule look like? Well, pick-up and drop-off times are going to remain the same, so we would still start school at 8:00 a.m. and we would still end school at 3:30 p.m. Most of what would look different, especially from the students' point of view, would be chapel, lunch, and passing periods. In chapel, for example, what we would do is take specific grade levels and rotate them through in-person chapel while the other grade levels watch via live stream with their teachers in classrooms. For lunch, we can stagger students so that not as many kids are going at once. Also, SAGE Dining is really working with us and doing a great job in helping to figure out ways that we can move lunch from just the refectory to other parts of the school. Finally, we're going to expand the passing periods, which will let us stagger the groups of kids who move through the hallways at any one time.

So, in every part of the school day, we will be able to meet those measures that we need to for social distancing and for safety. Now, if authorities recommend or if they require that we go above and beyond and do enhanced social distancing – and it's more than we can accommodate with just a modified, but somewhat normal schedule – then we'll be ready to shift into hybrid learning and that will reduce the number of students on campus in half at any given time.

A hybrid model is just what it sounds like. It's a combination of in-person learning and online, synchronous remote instruction. A hybrid instruction model for us is when we'll put our students into two groups, grades 6-9 and 10-12. I know some people may wonder why not just split it Middle School to Upper School? But, we have a much larger Upper School population than we do a Middle School population. So by splitting it that way, we can cut our population in half and it solves a lot of problems for us. Each group would be on campus two days a week and then at home for two days a week, following the exact same schedule as if they were in class. If we need a hybrid schedule, we want to make sure it disrupts learning as little as possible. Also, keeping kids in cohorts like that, reduces exposure as much as possible for us.

So grades six through nine will be on campus for a full day from 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. on both Monday and Tuesday, while students in grades 10 through 12 would learn from home – again, following the exact same schedule with mandatory attendance for their classes online with their teachers. Then it would flip and six through nine, on Thursday and Friday, would be at

home and 10 through 12 would be in class. On Wednesday, we didn't program any classes on campus. That gives our facilities time to do deep cleaning. But, we did program chapel, advisory, and extra help sessions for students with extra tutorial time with teachers.

The last piece that I want to talk about is what online learning would look like if we had to go to remote instruction. If we're required to close our campus, we want to make sure that we're keeping our commitment to the high quality education for our students. We know that the quality of education last spring was not ideal for many of our families. It wasn't ideal for me. It wasn't ideal, I think, for any of our teachers. But, we listened to the feedback that we got from families. We are confident that any instruction, if we have to go back to remote, will more closely resemble the TMI education that you expect and you deserve. Here's the biggest thing you need to know, classes will be synchronous, meaning students must attend class at specific times on a regular schedule with their teachers. Attendance at those classes, along with chapel and advisory, would all be mandatory.

We know this is a lot to digest and so what we're doing is including preliminary schedules for our on-campus modified schedule and for our hybrid schedules as a download with this update. I'd like everyone to please keep in mind that this situation is constantly changing and, although the school year is getting close, between now and then the schedules we're sharing today may be modified. We hope that providing you a chance to review the schedules now will allow you to truly see the changes we've made that are going to help replicate the educational experience students receive here at TMI – even if we have to switch to remote instruction or a hybrid model. These schedules are the result of a lot of hard work by our faculty and our staff on the Academic Response Team. I'm really proud of my fellow teachers who have been having to reinvent what classroom instruction looks like as we're moving forward. We're going to continue to keep working and we're going to continue to share with you what instruction for next year is going to be as the summer continues. And now, I'm going to turn it back to Father Scott.

Thank you, Rob, for sharing what your Academic Response Team has been up to over these last couple of months. They have literally spent countless hours preparing to deliver to you, and to our students, the high academic program in the Christ-centered community that you have come to expect from TMI. I know that some of you may be wondering what it is that will then decide whether or not we stay on campus, go to a hybrid schedule, or even go to remote instruction. I want to remind you that in early June I shared with you a document that the Academic Response Team put together. It was a Reopening Guide and page 7 in that document outlines the criteria

that we'll use to determine when it's safe to be operating on campus versus in a remote instruction environment as the situation with COVID-19 changes. We will look at that criteria to decide whether or not we stay on campus, go hybrid, or go to remote instruction. Keep in mind, we would make that decision with these key factors: what our state and local guidelines require, what's consistent with other independent Episcopal and public schools in town, and what is the best advice from our medical consultants as we talk to our doctors and our health professionals.

To be really clear, I've said this a couple of times, if we are not on campus for school, it will be alongside every other private and public school in our area. If we can be on campus safely, we will be on campus safely and we will stay on campus safely. I also want you to understand that while public schools are requiring their families to choose in July whether or not that family is going to stay in class all semester or go remote instruction all semester, TMI families will have that choice throughout the year. So August 20th, we're back on campus. If you're not comfortable with your son or daughter returning to campus at that time, then we will ensure that your child is receiving the same quality education in real time from home that our students are receiving on campus.

The choice to come to campus or not is yours, TMI parents, and you can make that choice throughout the semester as often as you need to make it. We hope that by understanding the schedule options ahead; knowing that we'll have synchronous, face-to-face remote learning if we have to go there; that we're designing clear communication channels for our families; and that the safety measures we're putting into place, you will feel more prepared as we look ahead to next year.

I want to continue to acknowledge how difficult, financially, this time has been on all businesses and likely on your own household. Remember, TMI, we do have emergency financial aid. It's available for families who are severely impacted by COVID-19 and if you need to discuss those options, please reach out to Aaron Hawkins for more information.

Finally, before I wrap up today's update, I want to give you an update on Athletics. While we had hoped to bring our student athletes back to campus this summer, with the spike in COVID-19 cases around San Antonio, we've made the decision to amend the timeline for our return-to-play scenario. Our Athletic Department continues to remain in constant dialogue with health professionals in order to monitor and assess the evolving pandemic risks. At this time, the trajectory of infection rates is just too steep to hold activities on campus, putting our athletes, coaches, and school in a position of exposure. Therefore, we're continuing to suspend athletic



activities on campus until August 3rd, at the earliest. We feel that this is a necessary step not only for the health of our community, but also to support our goal which is to reopen campus on August 20th. Our Athletic Department is exploring every scenario to be able to give our athletes the best possible opportunity to participate in the sports that they love.

There are still many moving pieces and variables that we will face before reopening in August. From inside the classroom to out on the sports fields, to Chapel and lunch, we are evaluating all areas of life at TMI and we're looking at new ways to deliver the TMI experience and build a community in whatever environment we have. I bet, even after this video, you still have questions. If you do, call us. Do not tell yourself a story, do not wonder in silence; reach out to me, reach out to Aaron Hawkins in Admissions. Call us, text us. We are here to talk to you.

Stay tuned for my next update on or about July 17th. The closer we get to August 20th, the more details I'll be able to share with you. But until then TMI, stay safe, stay healthy, and know that you are loved and cherished.

Have a great Fourth of July weekend.

The Rev. Scott J. Brown

Husband to Kimberly

Father to Parker, Christopher and Angelene

Spurs Fan

Golf Fanatic

Head of School