

Hello, TMI! Fr. Scott Brown here with your Community Update for Friday, October 2nd. As you know, we just completed another full week of hybrid instruction and we are preparing to bring all students in all grades back to campus starting next week on Monday, October 5th. While many of you are excited, some of you are unsure about leaving the hybrid model and wondering how we will bring everyone back on campus together.

First, I want to start off by sharing that our hybrid weeks have gone very well with over 200 students and approximately 50 faculty and staff on campus each day. With every day that passes, we are all getting more accustomed to the new norms from mask wearing and social distancing, but the primary concerns we continue to hear from parents and students center around lunch and how that will work with everyone back on campus.

So let me answer your questions about lunch. Beginning next week, we will have two separate lunch periods while everyone is on campus. This means that while we will have double the students on campus, we are also doubling the time we have for lunch by having two lunches. The two separate lunch periods will each be approximately an hour in length and we will continue to have two separate serving lines during each lunch period. We've timed lunch and know that the length of time that passes from when the very first student goes through the lunch line to when the very last student is served, is only 20 minutes. But, this doesn't mean students are waiting in line that long, the average wait time for an individual student in line is around eight to 10 minutes. With almost an hour for lunch, there is plenty of time for students to get through the line and get their meal, eat, and still have time to visit with their friends and be outside playing to enjoy some recess. But if your child doesn't want to wait in line for even eight minutes during lunch, then please know that students are always welcome to pack and bring their own lunch, completely eliminating the need to wait in line.

In addition to the two separate lunch periods and two separate servings lines during each lunch period, our Corps of Cadets will continue to have formation at the start of the Upper School lunch period to help stagger the amount of students heading to lunch at the same time and our students will continue to spread out across campus to eat, ensuring that everyone can properly social distance. All of these things ensure that the wait time for lunch is reasonable and the extended lunch time still gives students just under an hour to eat, relax, do homework or play with their friends.

The next thing I want to talk about is the survey we sent out last week. Thank you to those of you who were able to complete the survey. We know this is a time when all of us are constantly

adjusting and innovating, and your feedback is really crucial. We had almost 100 people complete the survey and send us their feedback. I must say that you were loud and clear in your responses. I now fully understand that we should have the entire student body in remote instruction and that we should have the entire student body on campus simultaneously and that we should wear masks at all times and should also never wear masks. In all seriousness, conversations around how we should respond to COVID-19 are extremely diverse. While your passionate perspective about what is best for you, or your child is completely understandable, we are committed to doing what is best for your student and ALL students and all faculty and all staff.

So let me say a word about what you can expect next week. As you saw in an email earlier this week, we are keeping Wednesdays as our Community Day. During the past six weeks, our Community Days on Wednesday have allowed opportunities for our students to meet in small groups, meet with their clubs or organizations, gave them time to catch up and work on projects or study for tests, and it also allowed our facilities team extra time to deep clean our spaces, maintaining a higher level of cleaning standards to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this week we saw around 250 people on campus each day; next week we anticipate closer to 450. With this increase in people on campus, there is both excitement and nerves. By keeping our Community Day with no classes on campus, we can continue these practices of deep cleaning our facilities while less students are on campus and continue to offer time and space for our students to meet for extracurricular activities. The Community Day also offers our faculty and staff a much needed day to catch up as they continue to work harder than ever to meet the demands of teaching to in person and remote students simultaneously.

For those of you who are wondering whether instruction will be compromised by keeping one day a week as a Community Day with no in-person classes, I assure it it will not. Our learning objectives have not changed. However, *how* the information is covered has changed and that's because we began this year in a fully remote model, transitioned to a hybrid model with some students still in remote instruction, and are now preparing to be back on campus four days a week with some students remaining remote. As I said earlier, this is a time of adjusting and innovating, and our amazing faculty have been adapting with these changes, tailoring their lessons and delivery to meet the demands of each model of learning. But just because the way the information is covered is different than in the past, doesn't mean that the learning objectives have changed – those remain the same. Our students are not losing ground, they are still getting

a quality TMI education that is inclusive of not only content, but more importantly, skills that set our students up for success beyond TMI because they are learning *how to learn*.

Finally, I do want to point out that, like most things in life, there is always an exception to the rule. So, I want to mention a few important calendar notes for mid-October. On Monday, October 12, we will observe the national holiday and there will be no school for students or faculty. Then, on Tuesday October 13, our teachers will be having a faculty work day and there will be no school for students that day. Finally, on Wednesday, October 14, we will administer the PSAT for students in 9th-11th grade. The PSAT is scheduled to take place on a Wednesday, even though it is a Community Day. That means, students in 9-11th grades will be on campus on Wednesday, October 14 in their assigned classrooms with faculty for the PSAT even though it will be a Community Day for the rest of the grades. The rest of that week, October 15-16, we will resume with all grades on campus. To help illustrate the changes for the week of October 12-16, we are attaching another calendar with this email for the next four weeks.

As we get ready to welcome all of our students back to campus at the same time, we are also nearing the end of our first 3-week block of asking you to choose in-person or remote instruction for your child. Like I expressed earlier, this is way too soon for some of you and way too late for others. That is why we provided you with the choice of on campus instruction or remote instruction through Oct. 9. We had 45 students choose to continue with remote instruction while the remaining 415 students came back for hybrid instruction these past few weeks.

I want to remind both parents and students that this is not a daily choice. For both teaching and safety purposes, we need everyone to understand the choice going forward. If you chose on-campus instruction and don't come to campus, you will be considered absent. The Zoom option is for the students who have chosen remote instruction and communicated that to the Admissions Office. For our on-campus students, if you are not feeling well or traveling, you are welcome to access the Zoom, but you will be considered absent. I also want to remind our students that they must follow all Zoom protocols when attending classes remotely. This pertains to backgrounds, uniforms, and other established class guidelines.

Previously, we asked you to commit to either on-campus or remote instruction through October 9. With that date just one week away, it's time for you to make another 3-week decision. For students currently attending classes remotely, the Admissions Office will reach out to you to confirm your selection through October 30. For students who are currently attending classes on campus, and you would like to switch your child to remote instruction, please complete the

Remote Instruction Selection Form that we've included as a link with this video. And, finally, if your child is currently attending in person classes and will continue attending in-person classes, no action is required. Please reach out to Aaron Hawkins, our Director of Enrollment Management, if you have any questions concerning the remote instruction selection process. We understand that circumstances change and will be happy to discuss your situation and how we can best support your student.

I am really proud of our faculty and the work they have done these past 6 weeks of remote and hybrid instruction. In case you haven't heard it in a while, we have the best faculty on planet earth. They are committed to making sure that every student at TMI is healthy, safe, engaged, challenged and cherished.

Finally, I want to wrap up with some good news for our athletic teams. As we all return to campus in an expanded capacity, so too will our fall sports. We will begin to allow spectators to come watch some of our home volleyball matches and, with COVID protocols, we will resume practices for both cheer and football. Looking ahead to the winter season, all of our winter sports are expected to begin on time. Our pre-season workouts for basketball, soccer, and swimming will begin on October 13th and will extend through the start of their regular seasons on November 2nd. All of our winter practices will also include enhanced safety measures to help lower our exposure risk. There will be important informational sessions coming soon with our Athletic Director Coach Palomo to explain and familiarize everyone with the changes, so please be on the lookout for those invitations. The Athletic Department is looking forward to coming back to campus and ramping up our sports programs.

I am proud of all that our faculty and staff have accomplished over the past few months and am excited for what lies ahead. I love you all; Go Panthers.

The Rev. Scott J. Brown

Husband to Kimberly

Father to Parker, Christopher and Angelene

Spurs Fan

Golf Fanatic

Head of School