

Hello, TMI! Fr. Scott here with another community update for November the 13th. This will be my last update before we head into the Thanksgiving break at the end of next week, so I want to go ahead and wish you all now a restful holiday week and a Thanksgiving full of joy...and social distancing!

I want to start off by addressing some COVID-related topics and alleviating as much fear as possible because I know we've sent you a lot of emails over these past few days. We've asked a lot of students to quarantine these past few weeks and I want to give you an update of where we're at right now. At the filming of this video, we currently have 64 students and 0 faculty members in quarantine. To date, we've asked a total of 134 people to quarantine. But, that doesn't mean that we have a high number of positive cases, most of these quarantines are precautionary so that we can prevent the spread of the virus. While I know having to quarantine can be difficult and disrupt your own daily lives, it helps us to protect and look after the entire TMI community.

Despite all the students we've asked to stay home and quarantine, at the time of this recording, we have had only 4 positive cases on campus. But let me put that into perspective, that's 4 cases out of roughly 600 students, faculty and staff who have been coming to campus every day since we re-opened for full, in-person instruction. And, all 4 students developed symptoms while they were in quarantine. That means we prevented the possibility of a higher spread. There's also no evidence that *any* of them contracted the virus on campus; this all means that what we are doing is working. We have a whole community to look after and using preventative measures like hand washing, mask wearing, and social distancing, along with thorough contact tracing to quarantine early, will help us to best take care of everyone on this campus.

Remember, quarantine does not equal COVID. We have a fair number of students in quarantine, but we have a remarkably low number of positive cases of COVID. Some more numbers for you:

- 14% of our student body is in preventive quarantine through Thanksgiving break.
- 3% of our international students are still at home.
- 9% of our students are remote by choice.

That means that, at the filming of this video, 74% of our students are on campus today! Even with a high number of students quarantining, 74% on campus is higher than most of our peer schools in town, in the area, and in the state. When we return after Thanksgiving and our currently quarantined students return, we'll have 88% of our students on campus. That's a remarkably high percentage compared to our peer schools.

This tells me that the procedures we have in place, the work our teachers are doing in the classroom, the campus' commitment to COVID safety, our contact tracing and communication with you, all is working. It tells me that you, families, are confident enough in all we're doing to send your children to campus each day. We're proud of the work we're doing and are honored to be able to keep doing it on campus each day.

So, we will be staying the course with in-person instruction as we finish the semester. The administrative team and I are constantly communicating, evaluating, and brainstorming about the risks, options, and what's best for this community. "Staying the course" is not a decision that was made lightly or without thorough evaluation; everything we do is with the purpose of bringing your students the best educational experience while keeping them as safe as possible.

Some of you might be wondering why we are staying the course. I can tell you that the data shows we have a very low rate of positive cases (remember, quarantine does not equal COVID) and if the need arises, we can – and are prepared to – shift to remote instruction almost instantly. Our faculty have been working hard to deliver instruction to students who are in person and those who are remote. They have been planning and preparing their curriculum to handle a quick shift from in-person to fully remote. If the time comes, we are ready.

So what will determine a shift to remote instruction for TMI? Unfortunately, there is no single, hard and fast marker for making that call. I can tell you that there are a number of indicators that we monitor constantly that will play into a decision to go remote. One metric we watch is the Metro Health dashboard for school risk level. It is currently in the yellow zone, but a shift into or toward the red would lead us to consider the option of going remote. Additionally, other factors that could lead us to making a decision to switch to remote would be the number of faculty and substitute teachers affected or a significant amount of community spread.

I wish I could give you a firm, single marker to watch, but the reality is that a number of factors will play into a decision to go to a hybrid or remote and predicting what will happen is simply impossible. Rest assured, however, that we have the health and safety of your students and our entire community as our top priority.

As we get ready to head into the Thanksgiving break and holiday season, I want to remind you that if you are at all uncomfortable with your student returning to campus after the Thanksgiving break or during the holiday season, you are welcome to choose remote instruction for your

student. While we are asking that all members of our community continue to make wise choices that keep in mind the best interest of both your family and the larger TMI community, we also understand that the holiday season may bring unease that wasn't there before.

If you know you would like to transition your student to remote instruction, please reach out to Aaron Hawkins, our Director of Enrollment Management, in the Admissions Office. He and his team can help your family transition smoothly to remote instruction and then back to in-person instruction when you are ready.

Now some of you might be wondering, what does all this mean for athletics? As with everything, we've been continually assessing every sport in order to mitigate the risk of exposure as much as possible. Unlike our fall sports of volleyball and cross country, we can not mitigate the risk for our winter sports to the same level. For this reason, we've reminded our winter sport athletes and families of their option to choose remote instruction to help keep their student athletes and the community as safe as possible during the season.

While choosing remote instruction does not eliminate the risk of exposure for an athlete and his or her team, it does reduce the risk of exposure by being away from other students both during and between classes, which may also help protect the entire team and help the students to enjoy a successful sports season.

Whether it's on the athletic fields, in the classrooms, during lunch, or even during the upcoming holidays, we are asking that you make responsible choices in the role you play to help prevent the spread of COVID. Please continue to wear your masks outside of school, continue to social distance and wash your hands, and give additional consideration to how you travel and celebrate with extended family during the breaks. Please keep in mind that your actions affect not just your own family, but the entire community. This holiday season, please remember to "Love Your Neighbor."

Finally, I want to switch gears and talk about a few things NOT related to COVID. As a reminder about exams, as we approach the end of the semester, with the exception of a few AP courses, we are not going to hold the traditional two-hour, end-of-semester exams that we would normally hold during the last week before the Christmas break. More information will be coming from your students' teachers about their assessments for the end of the year.

One other scheduling announcement I want to let you know about is that we will be keeping Wednesdays as our off-campus Community Day through the 3rd quarter, March 4. This has been a great opportunity for our facilities team to deep clean the campus, for clubs and teams to meet, in addition to providing additional time for homework or meeting with instructors. Not being on campus does not mean teaching and learning isn't taking place. We have received great feedback from you all regarding Wednesday and feel there is value and merit in keeping them through the uncertainty of the 3rd Quarter. Since we can not predict how the spring semester will play out, we are extending the Community Day through the 3rd quarter only, for now.

Now, to wrap up with some good news!

I want to give a shout out to our boys cross country team on placing 3rd overall at the TAPPS state meet at the beginning of this month. With over 33 schools and 200 runners, it was a great finish! And, Freshman brothers Marcelo Parra and Franco Parra both finished 2nd and 10th overall.

Kicking off the winter sports season, last Friday, our Panther swim team had their first meet of the season and broke three TMI records! The foursome of Meredith Holcomb, Gabby Beck, Emily Kitayama, and Calista Kelner broke two of the three TMI team relay records from 2017 and Meredith Holcomb broke the 100 backstroke team record by 1.3 seconds!

On Wednesday, our Corps of Cadets marched in a Pass in Review for Veterans Day and it was outside for the first time in over a year. They all did an amazing job and looked fantastic.

Yesterday, we celebrated the grand opening of the Walker Innovation Center with a virtual ribbon cutting ceremony that you can watch on our YouTube channel.

AND, this morning in chapel, we celebrated students and their achievements in being named to the National Merit Scholarship Program, National Hispanic Recognition Program, and the National African American Recognition Program.

Behind the scenes, our Parent Volunteers serving on the TMI Fund Parent Cabinet have been working hard and are getting ready to send a special message to each of their grade levels next week asking other parents to join them in being "ALL IN for TMI!" The TMI Fund campaign has officially begun and is our school's single most important philanthropic priority of annual giving programs that is grounded by our 127-year history of traditions and excellence.



Finally, with the creation of our new Equity Task Force this year, for the first time, 6 TMI students will be attending the virtual NAIS Student Diversity Leadership Conference this year.

With that, I want to say Thank You for being a part of the TMI community and for trusting us with the most precious gift God has ever given you, the gift of your child. I am proud of the work our faculty and staff have been doing to continually adapt, grow, and overcome the challenges that COVID has presented to all of us this year. Let's continue to wear masks and social distance so that we can stay safe on this campus. I hope you enjoy your Thanksgiving break, I hope you enjoy some time with your family, 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