Oct. 16, 2020

Dear BMS Families,

Greetings on a rainy Friday. School has been in session for a full month! I want to thank all of you for helping your children navigate these past 4 weeks. Our teachers are collaborating to make their zoom classes engaging, and I am so grateful for how much they have learned about teaching in a virtual setting. They are continually revamping ideas to improve instruction and support students. Your feedback has been helpful and your kind words have been energizing. I continue to be reminded daily why I am so grateful to be a part of this special community.

I apologize in advance for the many emails you will be receiving from school in the next couple of weeks. It is a busy time with Back to School Night and preparing for our transition to hybrid. I will do my best to keep my emails to essential information. Please see below for updates and upcoming events:

**Reminder Back to School Night(s) - Next week!**
Team teachers are looking forward to meeting you on zoom next week. The goal of our Back to School Night is to share information regarding curriculum, technology and support for students. Questions regarding individual student progress will not be part of this meeting. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child, please email the teacher or counselor directly.

**Metco Families:** We will have a 30 minute meet and greet with parents for each grade level starting at 6:30PM (prior to your child’s team zoom meeting) with our administrators and Metco counselor, Gillian vanDelft. Please check your email for zoom links from Gillian at the beginning of next week.

**Below are the dates and times for the zoom Back to School Night meetings by grade:**

- **Tuesday, Oct. 20 at 7PM** - 8th grade teams (Turquoise, Emerald & Orange)
- **Wednesday, Oct. 21 at 7PM** - 7th grade teams (Green, Blue & Teal)
- **Thursday, Oct. 22 at 7PM** - 6th grade teams (Red, Purple, Coral)

**Team teachers** will be sending the zoom links to these meetings so check your email.

**Multi-team teachers** (World language, Physical Education & Health, Fine and Applied Arts) will introduce themselves to you by sharing videos about their curriculum and expectations along with their contact information.
**Moving to Hybrid**

Newton middle schools are moving forward with plans to start our hybrid program during the week of November 16. You will be receiving a questionnaire from the district that will ask you to confirm your choice of hybrid or distance. This survey is important because it is critical that we have the correct numbers as we plan for in-person learning.

Next week I will send out a video presentation to all families and teachers that explains our hybrid model. I will include a google form in that communication that allows you to submit questions regarding the model. Also, on October 26 at 5:00PM administrators at Brown will hold a zoom meeting to give you an opportunity to ask questions regarding hybrid as well. We will send out the link next week.

**Faculty Professional Development**

We continue to be committed to becoming a more actively anti-racist school system in Newton. This year we will be continuing our work with faculty on our own racial identity development. With the clear need to focus on racial justice in our country, we recognize that understanding ourselves and others and hearing each other’s stories is essential to making progress. Our Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Kathy Lopes, has trained a number of middle school educators and we will be rolling out a menu of opportunities this year for teachers to explore issues around race as we work towards the goal of anti-racist teaching.

Our advisories will be working on lessons focused on the One School, One Book initiative. The book *New Kid* by Jerry Craft was our selection this summer. It is a terrific graphic novel about the experiences of a black boy in a primarily white school. We highly recommend that parents read it as well so you may have conversations with your child regarding the themes and ideas this novel explores. The author, Jerry Craft, will be doing a zoom presentation for our entire student body on December 2 thanks to the generosity of our PTO. We are very excited for our students to have this opportunity to “meet” the author and hear about his journey.

**A Message from Ruth Hoshino Director of School Health**

*October Updates from School Health Services*

We hope the start of fall finds your family settling into a new “normal” routine of in-person and remote learning days. These are challenging times for many families, and we want you to know the school
nurses are available as a resource whether it’s food, mental health referrals, or something else. Reach out if you need us.

Here are a few health reminders:

**Daily Health Assessment** –

- For in-person learning be sure you complete the Daily Health Assessment with your child each morning. This is one of the COVID-19 prevention pillars that if followed, will help to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and allow the hybrid learning model to continue. Consider posting it in your home where you exit so you don’t forget.
  - Use a thermometer to take your child’s temperature each morning. Do not come to school if your child’s temperature is above 100 degrees F.
  - If you’re having difficulty obtaining a thermometer, check with your child’s school nurse.
  - If your child has difficulty tolerating an oral thermometer, consider a touchless model.
- If your child is staying home from school due to COVID-19 related symptoms, please call the school nurse in addition to checking in with your child’s healthcare provider about next steps.
- If your child has COVID-19 related symptoms, to return to school s/he will need either a negative COVID-19 test (PCR preferred, antigen ok, antibody not accepted) or a written alternative diagnosis from a healthcare provider. School nurses are available to help answer questions. Please reach out if your child has symptoms.

**Flu Vaccine**

- Flu shots: All students (even those learning remotely) must have a flu shot by 12/31/20, as required by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. If your family is having difficulty obtaining a flu vaccine, please check www.newtonma.gov/flu for a list of resources. Be sure that your child’s school nurse has documentation of your child’s flu vaccine.

**Medication at School**

- Please note that regular rules apply for medication administration at school. All medications require a signed parent permission form and a written medication order by a prescriber. The form to use can be found here http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/70889
Students cannot transport medication. Contact the school nurse to arrange medication drop off.

**Chromebook Distribution**

Our IT department is working feverishly to prepare the new chromebooks for all middle school students. It is estimated that we will be distributing them at Brown during the first week of November. More information will follow once we have the exact details. All students have been assigned a device and will be given one unless they already received one THIS year. Families who received a Chromebook LAST spring will return them to the school when they come to pick up their new Chromebook.
School Pictures!
The opportunity to see all students as they pick up their Chromebooks opens up the possibility to have school pictures! We will send more specific information regarding the entire process as soon as possible.

I want to wish you a safe and healthy weekend!

Kim Lysaght
Principal
Charles E. Brown Middle School