

This is the third update provided by the school regarding plans for the fall of 2020. The first two email updates were sent on May 22 and June 12.

Dear BJAMS Families,

Happy July! I hope that you are all enjoying the start to your summer and that you have had a chance to soak up the sunshine, explore some of Vermont's trails, and swim in the many lakes, ponds and brooks here in our beautiful state. I guess what I am trying to say is that I hope you and your children have escaped the screens that have occupied the better part of the last couple of months!

We have some exciting updates as we look toward the fall!

- We have been able to secure 15 Chromebooks and 5 iPads for student use through our access to Title IV funds (supports the comprehensive needs of students in a variety of settings) for the 2020-2021 school year! This equipment will be available for students who need access, should the state require that we dismiss again this coming year.
- Also, through our access to Title I funds (provision of educational services for populations in need), we will welcome a Literacy and Math Interventionist who will engage with students in grades K-8! This will be a licensed teacher who will work with students needing extra support (both remediation and enrichment) in those two content areas.
- We are also advertising for a part-time school nurse, using our (anticipated) access to CARES Act funding.
- Finally, through Title IIA funds (professional development for teachers), teachers will continue their work with a Literacy Coach and teachers will also work with a Math Coach to strengthen instructional practices. These are very exciting additions and we know how much this will mean to our school community.

We are also thrilled to announce a few new hires. We will be opening our Pre-K 3 program this school year and we have hired Mrs. Jessica Titcomb to teach our youngest learners. Jessica has owned and run her own pre-school; she and her family are living in Richmond and are very excited to join the BJAMS family. We are also excited to announce that Mrs. Cindy Nutter will join us as our upper school teacher of Mathematics! Cindy resides in Stowe and brings with her experience in both national and international schools. We continue to advertise for Kindergarten and we will provide an update once a hire has been made.

As promised, I will continue to provide updates regarding our reopening plan and this note shares the progress we are making. As you are all happily aware, both Dr. Levine and Secretary French support the return to in-person learning this fall! Everyone at the school is both relieved and thrilled with this news! However, there are many guidelines that schools and families must adhere to in an effort to minimize the spread of the virus that kept us apart this spring. At this point, Dr. Levine and Secretary French plan to open schools at Step 2, which means schools are open for in-person learning with enhanced physical distancing and several safety measures in place.

There are many changes that are headed our way. These changes will require flexibility, patience, and understanding. This is new to all of us. And while there will be challenges and likely some bumps along the way, we are working hard to focus on the fact that in-person learning is the PREFERENCE of us all and these changes are better than the alternative of learning at home. **WE WILL BE TOGETHER AGAIN - YAY!!!!** We need to do our best and keep our eyes on the prize - learning in school where we belong!

Here are the most significant of the changes the state has provided:

- Only the parents of our youngest students will be permitted in the building at the start and end of the school day. We will provide details regarding drop-off and pick-up as our committees complete their work.
- Health screenings will happen each day at drop-off. The health screenings will include questions and a temperature check each morning. We will provide the details as our committees complete their work.

- Students and staff will wear facial coverings in the building. We anticipate specific guidance regarding age expectations shortly. The school is working to provide three facial coverings per student.
- The state is not allowing schools to offer choral music. Additionally, schools may not instruct woodwind or brass instruments.
- Large gatherings that include mixed grades are not permitted during the school day. We are currently working on alternatives and adjustments to morning assemblies, recess, lunch, and school Mass. At this time, our After School Program is permitted to operate.

As referenced in my last update on June 12th, we formed a Reopening Committee. The committee then morphed into subcommittees focusing on four areas: building/grounds, health/safety, communication, and instruction/assessment/technology. Since the formation of this committee on June 10th, the committee and subcommittees have met twelve times to tackle Vermont's published guidelines. And we aren't finished yet! We still have quite a bit of work ahead of us, but I am incredibly proud of the work we have completed to date.

Here is an overview of some of the work that is in progress:

Building and Grounds: Signage (hygiene practices, symptoms to watch for, physical distancing reminders, occupancy limits for rooms in the school), isolation room planning (for students displaying symptoms), identification of health screening sites, planning for sanitation stations inside and outside of the school, disinfection schedules for playgrounds and equipment, physical distancing markers, removal of all cloth and plush supplies in classrooms, and plans for hydration stations.

Health and Safety: Screening procedures, student distancing, masks/buffs, labeled school supplies, sanitation of shared equipment, snack and lunch protocols, recess protocols, upper school instruction (the sharing of teachers), "specials" protocols, possible school calendar alterations, and travel surveys for staff.

Communication: Plans for daily school communication using a new platform, website updates and maintenance, clear explanations regarding new procedures for: drop-off, pick-up, health screenings, schedules, family travel plans, parent/guardian subscriptions to Google Classrooms, and any new protocols as they arise.

Instruction, Assessment, Technology: Academic scheduling and daily breaks (including what subjects to include in a possible return to distance learning), work submission consistency, video conferencing consistency, the implementation of weekly progress reports (in the event of a return to distance learning), assessment planning, and a new technology survey that includes internet access.

I know this has been an incredible amount of information and that it is a lot to digest. Please take the time to process the contents of this email before speaking to your children about the changes ahead. Your attitude when presenting this information will shape how your children receive these changes. If you are outwardly sad, they will be sad. If you are outwardly frustrated, they will be frustrated. But if you are able to explain some of these changes in such a way that promotes the need for patience, understanding, and flexibility, your child will continue to develop these very important traits. If possible, focus on the fact that we will be **TOGETHER** safely.

Also, please recognize that there will be adjustments to what I have shared with you; the state will use the most current data to inform decision-making as we get closer to our reopening date of August 24. **We cannot WAIT to start the year with everyone together again!** Please be on the lookout for another update in the coming weeks. Hopefully, it won't be quite as long!

Stay safe,

Carrie Wilson