August 31, 2020

Dear BTW Students and Families,

After many weeks of difficult choices and decisions, I am so pleased to welcome all of you to the 2020-2021 school year. As with the end of the Spring semester, we continue to live in unprecedented times. And while our school year will look very different than those that came before it, I truly believe that this community is up to any task that it placed before us!

As we approach this school year, our focus will remain on maintaining a safe environment for our students. We are committed to hearing the voices of our students and community as we tackle the important societal issues that confront us. We are committed to being a campus that fully supports what it means to be anti-racist. We are committed to providing a safe space where students know and understand what teen dating violence is and how to report it. And, most importantly, we are committed to adopting social and emotional best practices to support our students and our faculty as we do this work while providing the best education possible. Our theme for this year is CommUNITY. In the midst of all that is going on in our world, we must unite as a school to model what it means to be a community of artists and thinkers that will write (right) the next chapter of our society.

As I shared with our new students during Flight School, I am guiding myself through this year using the ARTS acronym:

A – Activism as Artists. First and foremost, we are a community of artists. We have an opportunity to channel our activism through our individual and collective artistry.

R – Respect and Relationships. We are in an often tenuous time where respect is compromised and relationships are strained. Through our FLEX classes and every moment we have together, there are important opportunities to always model respect and maintain healthy relationships.

T – Talk and Trust. We must engage in healthy ways to talk to one another, even about difficult situations. Talking in appropriate ways allows us to build trust and allows us to act appropriately on information.

S – Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) and Social Media. Social Emotional Learning is a critical component to keeping ourselves healthy and supporting the work I have already mentioned. We will also educate our students in knowing the proper ways to handle social media in order to protect themselves and not to infringe upon the rights of others.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our Crossroads Committee. Many of the teachers involved in this committee have spent hours on Zoom calls this summer, listening to student voices and helping to craft our plans for the upcoming school year. Things will look and feel different, and I am asking all of our students to approach our discussions fully committed to the process and with an open mind.

Now, on to the important information on how we will open our school year!

September 8 – First Day of School for Students.

Students will begin in their Conservatory and then break out into their FLEX Classes. The Conservatory link will be sent out to students prior to the first day of school. The student’s FLEX Zoom Link can be found in in their FLEX Classroom on PowerSchool Learning (dallasisd.learning.powerschool.com). Our FLEX families will be incredibly important throughout the school year, both during virtual and in-person learning. In addition, our students will receive their virtual arts instruction during their morning “Arts Block”. This will be explained in detail by each Conservatory Director. I have included the actual “bell schedule” for virtual learning at the end of this letter. We recommend students use this schedule as a way to allocate their time during the school day and to know when teachers are available for support and/or live instruction for their class period.
During the first week we will be spending a great deal of time during FLEX and the morning Arts Block training our students and having conversations about the topics listed above. This will include Cultural Intelligence and Anti-Racism, Social-Emotional Learning, Teen Dating Violence, and Social Media Best Practices.

If you have any technology concerns or issues, please contact our librarian, Ms. Natalia Ivinskaya, at nivenskaya@dallasisd.org. By the end of this week, all of our students should have received a device to use beginning from the first day of school.

**October 6** – Anticipated first day of in-person instruction for our students.

Beginning October 6, we will be following a **hybrid model** which will bring our 9th and 10th graders to campus on Mondays and Tuesdays for their arts classes. 11th and 12th graders will report on Thursdays and Fridays for their arts classes. Academic classes will remain virtual under our hybrid model. Wednesdays will be reserved for teacher training, special events, and teacher office hours to support academic online learning. We will be sending more information to you about the hybrid model as we approach our in-person instruction date, especially as you make the important determination whether to remain in an online environment or choose to attend school in-person. Additionally, we will share the important safety protocols that are in place to keep our students and teachers healthy and protected.

Even throughout this pandemic and the many social justice issues that we will tackle, it is important to keep our vision and mission in front of us as we plan for the future. I have included these statements below so that you can re-familiarize yourself before we begin school on September 8th.

**Mission**

As Dallas’ revolutionary high school for 21st century scholar artists, we provide intensive, integrated training to build a bridge to the post-secondary and professional world.

**Vision**

*We are an intersection of innovation and creation.* We are a home to the young artists and thinkers who will write the next chapter of our society.

Let’s bring our smiles, our assumption of positive intent, our creative minds, and our collective determination to make a difference to this school year. I am eager to get to work and make this year a positive one for all of you. See you on September 8th!

Yours in CommUNITY,

Scott M. Rudes, Ph.D.
Principal
*When a 4-day week occurs on the calendar, we will shift accordingly.

For our first week, we will be on the following rotation: