



**Blacksburg New School**

2500 North Main Street, Blacksburg VA 24060

[www.blacksburgnewschool.org](http://www.blacksburgnewschool.org)

540-552-6693

Est. 1971

July 25, 2020

Good evening,

Yesterday, the BNS Board voted unanimously to implement a 4 day/week (MTRF), 9am - 1pm in-person schedule for our elementary and middle school reopening on August 13. After careful deliberation and much consideration of risk mitigation, teacher workload, and parent need, the Board concluded that this schedule is the most maximized option for in-person learning that the school can provide at this time. Some at-home/remote learning will be expected for all students, as some classes need to be delivered remotely (e.g., health/P.E.). Wednesdays will be reserved for activities such as teacher planning, connecting with remote learners (which will also occur throughout the week), potential opportunities for whole class virtual connection (as decided by individual teachers), and deep cleaning the school.

As the governing Board of BNS, we strive to make decisions that are in the best interest of teachers, parents, students, and the organization as a whole. The Board is confident that this decision balances the disparate needs across these groups and is in line with our goal to foster healthy kids, healthy teachers, and a healthy school throughout this crisis. We are keenly aware that this is a fluid and rapidly changing situation, and the Board plans to make decisions to adapt operations as needed. With regular feedback from members of our health subcommittee and our contacts at the local health department, we will create benchmarks that would prompt a special session of the Board to reevaluate our plans. We will also continue to monitor VDOE/VCPE guidelines and messages from the governor about changes to schools' opening status. Some of our subcommittees continue to work to create policies, guidelines, FAQs, and health forms that we will share with you as they are finalized. The Board will continue to provide weekly or bi-weekly updates, and once school begins, your classroom Board representative (noted below) will be reaching out regularly to provide space for collecting feedback from families. You can also continue to share your thoughts on the [BNS community padlet](#). Our Personnel Chair and the personnel subcommittee will be working to ensure teachers' voices are heard and their concerns are addressed.

In response to the constraints posed by the virus and to continue teaching and learning during a time of world crisis, we - like all schools everywhere - will modify our curriculum and our expectations. Some content and the number of assignments will be reduced. Learning activities that get kids creating, expressing, thinking, and moving will be emphasized. The emotional health of students, teachers, and families will be held at the center. Keeping students engaged with each other and connected to the learning process will be prioritized. As a Board, and in close collaboration with teachers and the entire BNS community, we will continue to set expectations for what this new learning means and how it will be implemented.

Our greatest asset during these unprecedented times is our strength as a community. If we remember that we are not making these sacrifices alone, but as a community and for each other, and if we support each other with compassion and grace, then we can be confident that we can make it through this unusual time with that community intact. We will all undoubtedly learn new things this year, things that we can carry with us into the future as we work and adapt to find new normal at BNS. Thank you for learning with us.

Sincerely,  
The BNS Board

**Classroom Board Representatives -**

**Red** - Courtney Simón Grohs, [csgrohs@gmail.com](mailto:csgrohs@gmail.com)

**Orange** - Jen Irish & Robert Weiss, [jennifer.l.irish@gmail.com](mailto:jennifer.l.irish@gmail.com) or [weiszro@gmail.com](mailto:weiszro@gmail.com)

**Yellow** - Cindy Smith, [clsmith125@comcast.net](mailto:clsmith125@comcast.net)

**Green** - Kiyah Duffey, [kiyah.duffey@gmail.com](mailto:kiyah.duffey@gmail.com)

**Turquoise** - Julie Fox, [juliefox.nrvbirth@gmail.com](mailto:juliefox.nrvbirth@gmail.com)

**Blue** - Cara Daggett, [caranew@gmail.com](mailto:caranew@gmail.com)

**Purple** - Stan Harvey, [stanford.a.harvey@gmail.com](mailto:stanford.a.harvey@gmail.com) or Kiyah Duffey, [kiyah.duffey@gmail.com](mailto:kiyah.duffey@gmail.com)