

May 27, 2020

Dear Mariana Bracetti Academy School Community,

I hope you and your family are well and healthy. As we are about to close the 2019-2020 school year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the past two months. Since our building closure, we have come together as a school and community and reinvented our approach to educate and to care for our students. Here are a few of the issues we tackled but in the end, we did so with grace:

- Parents have been given the arduous task of balancing family, school and work schedules;
- Students have bravely adapted to an online platform of learning in a ridiculously short amount of time;
- Instructional faculty and staff have learned new ways to deliver our curriculum under the most challenging of circumstances;
- Guidance counselors continued to provide social and emotional support and college counseling to our students; and
- Support & non-instructional staff continued to take on any challenge to keep the school moving operationally.

In the midst of all this disruption, we easily made the decision to keep our cafeteria opened and we have proudly served 23,772 meals to our students since March 16<sup>th</sup>. When we were faced with a dilemma of students without devices in the home, generous donors stepped up and purchased 330 Chromebooks for our students. We work together for a common purpose that comes from the heart and the beat of our heart is our children. With them in mind, we courageously adapt, we protect and we keep moving forward to give them opportunities to grow into independent adults. I thank you all for coming together in a time of uncertainty to provide for our children, and to teach them that challenges have solutions and together we can work through them.

Below are a few updates to end the school year and a glimpse looking ahead:

### **1. Closing of the 2019-2020 school year**

In the next few weeks, you will be receiving announcements on graduation, locker cleanouts, medication pick-up and how to return computers. You will also be hearing about virtual summer academic programs and ESY. After you receive the information, please reach out to your academy principal with any questions.

## 2. Beginning of the 2020-2021 School Year

Last Tuesday, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released school guidelines for the safe reopening of schools. The CDC made it clear that the considerations are meant to supplement any state regulations with which schools must comply. The Governor along with the Pennsylvania Department of Education is expected to announce the guidelines shortly. The guidelines may include a full reopening or a continuation of remote learning. There may even be different scenarios of the two options such as modified scheduling. There are a myriad of issues that need to be worked through and once we receive guidance from the Governor, we will be able to finalize a plan and share it with you. Please keep in mind, the guidance is coming from the Governor and schools must follow the regulations. While we do not know what to expect in the fall and winter of 2020, we do know we need to continue to exercise patience and kindness to all.

## 3. New Chromebooks

The federal government provided financial assistance to schools to assist with any COVID related expense. With the funding, we are purchasing Chromebooks for all students in grades K-12 for the upcoming school year. You will receive more information on expectations once the students return in September.

## 4. Construction at the School

The annex renovation has continued and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors are expected to be completed in August. In addition, we are installing a new roof and parapet. The demolition of the former faculty house on the property was scheduled to start this summer but the pandemic has caused a delay. Once a new timeline is developed, we will share it with you.

In closing, many decisions need to be made in the next month and we will frequently share developments with you on social media and our website. You can continue to reach out to your academy principal for additional information or needed support. Let's keep working together and we will get through this challenging time.

I wish you all good health, peace and a relaxing summer!

Sincerely,

*Angela Villani*