



## Message from the Head of School

Date Sent: Monday, Aug 23 at 1:45 PM

Dear Belmont Hill Parents,

We are so incredibly excited to welcome the boys back to campus on Monday, August 30 for Acclimation and Orientation. As was signaled last week, we will begin the year with universal masking indoors across campus and will issue a new three-ply Belmont Hill mask to each student during Acclimation and Orientation. Additionally, we are moving to a “grab and go” lunch program utilizing tents and outdoor eating for the opening of school. We learned just this morning that the Pfizer vaccine has now received full FDA approval. As a community, we happily have reached a 97% vaccination rate with our students at this time. We plan to be in touch with the parents of our small group of unvaccinated students in the days and weeks ahead as we now contemplate a timeline in requiring the COVID-19 vaccine in the future. You are welcome to click [here](#) for a full overview of current protocols that will continue to be updated throughout the fall.

Outside of the omnipresent and evolving COVID-19 landscape, there is so much to be enthusiastic about as we return for this school year. One example will be the opening of a new makerspace in Bolles House along with the addition of Mr. Ziff, our new Director of Makerspace. He expects to be teaching an engineering course, advising, and working to support students and faculty members with new, creative design projects and robotics programming. While the progress over the summer has been remarkable, pandemic lead times on certain key items related to this project have created substantial delays. We hope to occupy the new makerspace towards the end of the first semester and certainly upon return from winter break. Mr. Ziff will begin the year located in our existing iLab. We are also pleased to report that the Main Office, the Business Office, and the Head of School’s Office have moved up to Howe House in the center of campus. We look forward to welcoming you there at some point this year. If you would like to read a short biography of all new faculty and staff, please see the document attached below.

As we return to our traditional Belmont Hill schedule, we know that the pace for students, parents, and adults may feel a bit intense initially. The exciting parts of this will be a return to Harkness tables, community-based lunches, and all-School gatherings in the Hamilton Chapel. Fundamentally we will be back together once again. Learning from the benefits of our pandemic schedule last year, we have added a full 45-minute community block dedicated to advisory in addition to the traditional Tuesday morning

advisory meetings. As we work to further our progress in having all boys experience a deep sense of belonging at Belmont Hill, we will continue with advisory conversations in this area on a bi-weekly schedule this year. We are thrilled to share that Anna McDonald and Chris Zellner will join Caleb Collins and Bryson Rosser in working on a curriculum that will be catered more specifically to different age levels, and we expect to continue an open dialogue that strives to engage all voices and opinions in conversation across our campus.

We know that our teachers have shown a noteworthy level of academic empathy and support to the boys during the pandemic. This was intentional, but parents and students should be prepared that rigor around assessments and grading will return to their normal levels this year. Additionally, we have worked to help our faculty understand the difference between pace and high standards. While we do not want to overwhelm the boys, we will be re-emphasizing the establishment of our high standards around dress code, attention to detail, and a culture of accountability. We ask for your partnership in building and supporting these expectations at home.

We continue to view the opening of this year as being filled with hope and excitement. Our faculty and staff are returning refreshed and ready to make this a spectacular year for your sons. We remain eternally grateful for your faith in our mission as we embark on another wonderful school year here at Belmont Hill.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Schneider

*Ronald M. Druker '62 Head of School*

Attachment: [School Year 2021-2022 New Hires](#).pdf