

LaBrae Intermediate School Parent Update

August 2020
Volume 1, Issue 1

Dear LIS Parents and Guardians,

I know to some of you, I may be a somewhat familiar face here at LIS, as I have been a 5th grade Math teacher at LaBrae Intermediate for the last 11 years. Although I am a new principal here at LaBrae, I do have administrative experience from the 15 years prior to coming to LaBrae as a principal in a PreK-8th grade religious school.

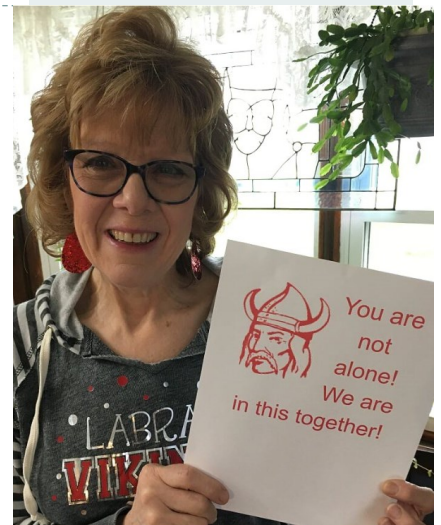
Though we are in the midst of turbulent and ever-changing times, I am excited and ready to begin walking with you in this new capacity, as I begin my 40th year (not a misprint) in education. My love of students and the educational community has never waned. I have always loved what I do. Even as a principal, I always taught some classes, so this will be my first time ever to be completely out of the classroom. Keeping my hand for 40 years directly interacting with students in the classroom, I think has kept me very grounded and current with how children, education and teaching have changed and how we must adjust to meet their needs.

I know there are many concerns and fears which have definitely colored our enthusiasm for returning to school with some added anxiety. Here at LaBrae, we understand that, and for the last several months we have been working together under the leadership of our superintendent: listening and planning for a safe and positive environment for your children and developing an educational plan that delivers instruction as directly as we can to your child. A plan which strives to meet their needs and moves us forward in meeting grade level expectations. We are ever aware of the social and emotional needs arising from our time of isolation and distance and how we can best reintroduce your child to a very positive learning experience, in what may seem to be a very restrictive environment. Please know and trust that we always have the best interest and heart for your children in every circumstance. I cannot promise you perfection, but I can say that we are in this together and as a staff we are committed to doing the best we can to walk with you through these ever-changing and challenging times. KAS

HEALTH & SAFETY FIRST!!!

Much has been accomplished here at LaBrae in preparation for on site instruction, Masks have been ordered and Sanitation Stations have been placed in the hallways and throughout the building as needed. Office areas and Cafeteria Check Out Stations have hanging plexiglass for protection. Classrooms have been measured and assessed for capacity to coincide with social distancing protocols and other protective equipment has been ordered for our teachers and students. We will begin scheduling our Scarlet and Gray Cohorts for the Hybrid Attendance Model where students will be in attendance on alternating days so we can maintain social distance protocols. All of these things and others have been accomplished as we plan for a safe restart of the school year.

Special Thank you to all our families who have participated in our surveys and zoom sessions with our superintendent, Mr. Calderone. Your feedback is so important to us and has been so critical in our recent planning!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Student Start Day has been moved back to August 31st to allow for additional preparation and planning time.
- New Special Schedule
- No Contact Lunch Cards
- Masks
- Permanent Pick Up Changes in Routine
- Remote Days
- Recess
- LIS Pantry
- School Supplies
- Class Transitions
- Homework
- Pac
- Communication



SPECIALS SCHEDULE CHANGES

This year our schedule for Specials will be a little bit different. Because of the alternating days of attendance, under the old schedule format, students would be having specials scheduled every two weeks. In order to simplify the schedule for students, we have changed our schedule for this coming year as follows:

Students in Grades 3-5 will have the same special for the first half of the quarter (4 1/2 weeks). At the quarter interims, they will switch to another special. Within the first semester of school, they will rotate half a quarter through Art, Music, Technology and Physical Education.

Students will still have library opportunities as a part of the ELA time but will be scheduled in small groups.

*“Education is the most powerful weapon
you can use to change the world”
Nelson Mandela*



CAFETERIA & LUNCHROOM

This year we are beginning the use of a cafeteria swipe card for students. They will use the swipe card, which will be scanned in the check out line. This will speed up the lunch line because students will not have to re-

member or enter their student ID number. Parents are asked to NOT send cash but use the Pay Schools App which you can access from the LaBrae Schools Website. It is under Quick Link and then drop down to Cafeteria Account/Fee Payments. All information and instructions are on that site.

At LIS, we have ordered lanyards with plastic holders so students can keep their cafeteria swipe card at school hanging in their cubby, get it before lunch and hang it up after. Hopefully, that will keep it from getting lost and keep it available for everyday use.

Breakfast will be a Grab ‘N Go Breakfast and lunch will be served in the lunchroom; it will be a healthy hot lunch.

We will be social distancing in the lunchroom with our custom dividers which will limit 4 students to a table. Students will have assigned seats in the lunchroom as well as in the classrooms and on the bus.

THE 2019-2020
YEARBOOKS HAVE
ARRIVED.

IF YOU PURCHASED A
YEARBOOK FROM THE
PREVIOUS SCHOOL
YEAR

THEY WILL BE SENT
HOME WITH
STUDENTS ,



LIS

PERMANENT PICK UP

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It seems this newsletter is almost completely focused on the many changes that we are implementing this year because of health and safety protocols that are necessary to keep our children safe. Our

Permanent Pick Up Routine also needs to be adjusted as well.

Since visitors will not be permitted in the building, and we are limiting the entrance of other people as much as possible, we will be changing student sign-out and pick up procedure to limit that access to our building. In the past, permanent pick up students have been picked up by parents coming into the main building complex through the event doors and signing out their children.

This year, we are asking parents to wait in their cars. At the appropriate time, staff members will walk students out to the parking lot where they can be picked up by parents or guardians. We are going to use a system similar to Bascom so that families will have a numbered card for identification. Please be patient as we implement this new system and work out a process that is safe for our children and families.

Remote Days

There has been a great deal of planning and preparation, done cooperatively among our combined staffs here at LaBrae, in formulating a plan and teaching framework specific to grade and subject level. As suggested by our superintendent, it is highly recommended that students follow a remote schedule as suggested by each teacher that follows the daily class schedule.

The most productive and engaging schedule would be one where the teachers and students in class and remote were following the same schedule. It would make direct interaction and teaching possible where appropriate and feasible. Keeping students to a normal routine and daily schedule is so important as we step back into engaging children in the learning process, whether that be at home or in school. Simultaneous schedule whether attending remotely or directly in class provides the greatest opportunities for success and engaging interaction between students and teachers. In other words, for maximum success, students should follow the same timed schedule at home as they would during school. If students cannot “tune in” at scheduled times, we are planning on having lessons that are taught directly recorded so they can be viewed at a later time.

REMEMBER YOUR MASKS

I am sure by now that you are fully aware of the necessity of masks for students as communicated in our district restart plan. I know that many of you have already started to get your children used to that new reality. If you have not, it is a good idea to get them used to wearing a mask. We will have mask breaks as needed, while keeping our 6 ft. social distancing.

To help students keep track of their masks and also to help keep them clean, we have ordered lanyards for the masks so that they can wear them around their neck. This will really be helpful in the lunchroom, where they will have to remove them to eat. This will keep them from falling on the floor, etc.

The district is providing one Viking mask; students may wear their own and we will have disposable masks available.

Students cannot depend on using the disposable repeatedly. They can purchase a new mask if they lose one and put it on their account.

We have also been contacted about additional donations of masks for our students, so I am anticipating that we will have more available.

Masks are mandatory for entrance to the bus and the school building.

WHAT ABOUT RECESS?



I know you have so many questions as we approach these new models of educating your children in the midst of the COVID crisis. One of our primary objectives and concerns is to keep your children safe. We have been discussing how to provide as much of a normal routine as possible, especially with daily practices that by their nature bring children into close contact.

The answer about recess is that we are looking at ways to provide student's opportunities to move and have physical breaks which we know they need and still maintain social distance and limited contact. We are looking at Brain Break activities in the classroom. It may be possible for students to go outside in small groups and do organized and supervised activities that would be safe and fun. As circumstances change with health guidelines and the status of exposure in our county, we are open to adapting our approach to meet the needs of our students and comply with recommended safety guidelines.

LIS PANTRY

Coming Very Soon we will have a pantry located in the LIS building. Know how important this resource has become for our families, we have been cleaning out a room and making space. With some added shelving, we will have food, clothing and other necessities available for our LIS students.

Knowing our LIS students did have access to the pantry located in the Middle/High School complex, this will be much more easily accessible for our families.

We appreciate so much the partnerships our district has developed with so many different agencies and those who regularly donate items to the pantry so that we can provide and meet the needs of many of our families.

Special thanks to Amy Frederick, who because of her compassion and heart for our

students, has been spearheading these programs for some time. I am so excited to be working with her and Mrs. Kowach to extend services directly to our students and families.

The LIS pantry will follow the same procedures and guidelines as the other LaBrae pantries. More information to come as we get closer to getting ours up and running.



STUDENT SUPPLIES

It is very important that students have their own school supplies. Supplies will NOT be shared by groups of students as has been the practice in the past. We are asking that each student has a small supply box filled with their own personal supplies. It should be of a size that students can store easily in their desk or cubby and be identified with their name. Any extra supplies you send can be collected by the teacher and stored for future use. It is always a good idea to label as much of their personal supplies as feasible.

Students should be able to use their supplies both in the classroom and for Art Class.



CLASSROOM TRANSITIONS

Students will be having limited transitions throughout the school day. The schedules were updated so that students would be staying in classrooms for longer periods of time and have less transitions throughout the day. While making transitions during the school day, we will be doing so while keeping the recommended social distance and wearing masks.



HOMEWORK...

Because of the necessity of using a remote model in our delivery of instruction this year and beginning our year with our Hybrid attendance model which has students alternating attendance remotely and in directly in class, our staff has decided that we would eliminate our regular practice of nightly work. Instead, homework will be considered as the completion of assigned activities and lessons that the teacher's require on the student's remote day of learning. This work will be checked upon the return to school and count towards the quarterly grades.



IT IS POSSIBLE TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT IT WILL BE. THE PRIMARY WAY TO PREPARE FOR THE UNKNOWN IS TO ATTEND TO THE QUALITY OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS, TO HOW WELL WE KNOW AND TRUST ONE ANOTHER. MARGARET WHEATLEY | 2004

INITIAL WEEKS OF SCHOOL –PAX TRAINING

We will be spending a great deal of time during the first few weeks of school, much more that we usually do, with our PAX Behavior training. Initially, we spend a few days helping students develop routines and appropriate behaviors through a series of classes where students give feedback and input to develop a positive behavior plan for the classroom, lunchroom, hallway, recess, etc. Because of the many changes and considerations we now have for health, safety and wellness, we are anticipating that this will take much more time.

We want students to feel comfortable and secure with our new “normal”. I think we should just present it as a matter of course that it is just what we have to do

right now to be safe and to help others be safe as well.

We are very cognizant that our children have been out of the school routine for sometime and that the return to the classroom in the midst of our current health crisis may trigger some added fear and anxiety. I think that, as adults, the less we display any symptoms of our own personal worries, the better for our children. We can approach these new guidelines in a very positive manner from the idea that as a LaBrae Viking Family, we are going to work together and help each other to be safe, healthy and happy in our new learning and hopefully temporary learning environments.



**(LIS) LABRAE
INTERMEDIATE
SCHOOL**

**LaBrae Intermediate
School is part of the
LaBrae School Complex
for grades 3-5**

Principal:

Mrs. Kay Suzelis

Secretary:

Mrs. Carrie Guesman

School Counselor:

Mr. Jason Diaz

Contact Information

**LaBrae Intermediate
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1001 N Leavitt Rd
Leavittsburg, OH**

**44430-9644
330-898-0800 option 3**



REMOTE PLATFORMS & COMMUNICATION

All teachers will be using Google Classroom as the common delivery platform for remote learning. Initially, we will be spending time during the first few weeks of school so that students are well acquainted with maneuvering through Google Classroom and the various digital programs that we are using, such as Reflex, Lexia, Think Central, Spell City, etc.

We have been discussing ways we can also help our school families through videos and resources to become familiar enough with how our digital programs work so they can be a support for students who need help during remote learning. As we get closer to our student start date, hopefully, we can have some of those additional resources in place.

From our experience in the Spring, we know that students had many questions about passwords, connectivity and specific digital programs during our distance learning time. We want to take those lessons we learned and prepare our students at the beginning of school to be more independent so they can easily navigate our various resources and programs.

Communication:

Students will be able to communicate with teachers on remote days through Google Classroom and their school email. Many of our teachers use REMIND, which is a communication app that allows teachers and families to communicate via email or text without actually having personal phone numbers.

This year, we are asking teachers to set Remind to go to their Email accounts rather than send alerts to their personal phones. Teachers will have specific office hours, after which your messages will then be answered the following day. While we understand that all families have their own personal schedules that place limitations on their ability to communicate during the school day, our staff will not be available 24/7. They will answer any communications in a timely manner, outside of instructional teaching time and within their office hours.

I know this newsletter may seem a little lengthy. I wanted to follow-up our superintendent's recent release of our remote learning plan with some more detailed information for our LIS parents.

I know that you have many more questions, but I hope I have answered some of the most pressing. We continue to work very hard to prepare our buildings, teachers and students for a very positive, safe and healthy beginning of our school year.

After 40 years in education, I can honestly say that this year will be unlike anything we've ever experienced. From experience I know that the things that challenge us help us to grow in ways we never imagined. We will come through this experience as better people. I look forward to seeing you all very soon.

Kay A. Suzelis