



November 19, 2020

Groves Families,

The end of the first trimester of the school year is coming to an end; it's hard to believe. Final exams will begin tomorrow and continue Monday and Tuesday. Book return opportunities will be Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday next week for first trimester materials that students will not need for second trimester. Teachers will let students know what materials are no longer needed.

There are no classes on Monday, November 30th. Second trimester classes will begin on Tuesday, December 1. Your student may have new classes that begin second trimester, so please have him/her check PowerSchool for schedules. Schoology will automatically update with new classes on 12/1.

Given all of the challenges and changes throughout first trimester, we have extended the pass/fail application deadline through the end of the week. Families who have students struggling academically will be contacted by counselors to discuss this option and what is involved.

I am proud of the work of our students and staff since August and the learning that has happened as we navigated changes that, often, were not in our control. I applaud the effort of the Groves community in what truly is one of the most challenging years of education.

We have three different committees comprised of students and staff that have been meeting for a few months to discuss both a possible in-person return and virtual learning. Part of our discussion has been around the topic of students feeling as if they are less engaged in classes when not turning on their cameras for classes on Zoom. I have heard from families that students are experiencing isolation and feel disengaged as well when not connecting with cameras on during instruction.

Since August, teachers have encouraged students to engage by turning on their cameras. Because we will be continuing our virtual learning model for an undetermined time, we are going to further encourage students to have cameras on beginning with second trimester. Students feel as if having cameras on creates stronger two-way interactions between students and teachers and also among students. There is research that says that this strengthens students' social and emotional wellness. Additionally, student attendance and engagement are strongly linked with student success.

The district has created language around this item that is attached to this email.

All of this said, we know that there are circumstances that would prevent a student from having a camera on during instruction. We ask that you communicate these concerns with your student's teachers, counselors, and/or administrators. As always, we will work with families on what is best for students. If there is a technology need for a webcam, please reach out to me, and I can help facilitate this with families.

### **Thanksgiving Meal Distribution**

Chartwell's is having a special Thanksgiving meal pick-up next week. Please see the attachment for details.

**BPS Saturday School**

We are happy to announce that the BPS Saturday School will once again be operating throughout the school year to offer academic support and tutoring for all BPS students grades K – 12. Although we are currently operating virtually as a district, BPS Saturday School takes place every Saturday (excluding holidays and breaks) throughout the school year. Saturday School is normally hosted in the media center at Berkshire Middle School, but we are now operating virtually through Zoom from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. each Saturday on the following dates:

November: 21

December: 5, 12, 19

January: 9, 22, 30

February: 6, 27

March: 6, 13, 20

April: 10, 17, 24

May: 1, 8, 15, 22

The BPS Saturday School Coordinators will be working together with Groves' NHS students as well as Oakland University student teachers to provide tutoring through Zoom and the use of "breakout rooms." Our coordinators will be able to maneuver back and forth between breakout rooms to be able to monitor and support the tutorials. Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2047672482?pwd=T3pVU1REUXZTN09NM1MvSSsrVTJiZz09>

Please visit the BPS Saturday School webpage to learn more and we hope to see you in this year's virtual setting! <https://www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/domain/839>

Finally, this part of the year is a time to show gratitude. I want to express how grateful I am to have the opportunity to return to a school I have always loved to continue my career. I have been graciously welcomed by this community, and I am so thankful to be able to work alongside you.

I wish you all a safe and relaxing holiday. Please reach out to me with any questions you have.

Warmest regards,

Dr. Smith

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**NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION:**

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**File attachments:**

[Thanksgiving Week Virtual Meals.pptx](#)

[District Language.docx](#)