



2150 Butler Pike | Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462
pmfs@pmfs1780.org | 610.828.2288

PMFS Head of School's Report to Plymouth Monthly Meeting

Prepared for 10-18-20 Meeting for Business

The following summary represents the state of Plymouth Meeting Friends School and includes issues and challenges recognized and addressed by PMFS faculty, staff, administration and the Head of School:

Reopening School:

The *PMFS Reopening Health and Safety Plan* was written in response to the PA Department of Education's directive that non-public schools formulate a plan and communicate that plan to constituents. The PMFS plan was reviewed by the Executive Committee, approved by the School Committee, distributed to all PMFS families and employees, and posted on the PMFS website.

On Tuesday, September 8th, we began the 2020-21 school year on campus. It was wonderful to welcome students and their families back to campus after over 5 months of separation. 87% of the student body attends school in person; and the remaining 13% learn via the *PMFS At-Home* instructional model.

We receive continuous positive feedback from families. They truly appreciate our efforts to keep students safe while moving the learning process forward and sustaining the class communities.

Enrollment, Admissions & Outreach:

The pandemic directly impacted the Spring 2020 admissions sessions, calling a halt to all scheduled in-person admission events, including family tours, student visits, and Tot Time preschool outreach events. Similarly, the re-enrollment process stalled for a prolonged period, well into the late spring. We experienced an extreme drop in re-enrolled PMFS students with only 55% retention of the student body. Such a decrease in enrollment impacted 2020-21 budgeting, staffing, class structure and employee salaries.

A steady increase of re-enrollment contracts was realized as parents learned of the School's plans and preparations for the 2020-21. Current enrollment is at **81** students, including 19 new students.

We continue to receive weekly inquiries from families seeking in-person learning that incorporates outdoor time. Since we are restrained by the social-distancing requirements in each learning space, our ability to accept new students is limited.

The Admissions events calendar for 2020-21 includes virtual tours and open houses. (Our Fall Open House is 10-18-20 at 1pm.) Campus tours and parent interviews will be offered in-person or virtually (based on the visiting family's comfort level).

All local community fairs & festivals that PMFS typically attends for outreach are cancelled in 2020.

2020-21: Class Structure & Instructional Models

Families who expressed discomfort with in-person learning, and with immuno-compromised students (or students with immuno-compromised household members) attend school through the *PMFS At-Home* instructional model. The *At-Home* model offers opportunities for students to connect with on-campus instruction, participate in most specials classes, receive small group instruction, and connect directly with the teachers during check-ins and 1:1 conferencing.

Class Pod	Facility	Class Pod Total	On-campus Students	PMFS At- Home Students
Pre-K	Little House	7	7	0
Kindergarten	Journey's End	15	10	5
1 st /2 nd Grade	Emerson	18	18	0
3 rd /4 th Grade	Annie H. Wilson Room	18	14	4
5 th /6 th Grade	Gym	23	21	2
				(9-8-20) Enrollment Total = 81

In order to preserve the “sanctity” of each class pod, a specials teacher remains embedded in the group for two weeks. Specials teachers offer instruction in their subject area, supplemental academic support and assistance with student supervision.

Classroom spaces were changed and modified to maintain social distancing requirements. Each class pod has their own restrooms and covered outdoor learning space. An alternating schedule allows each class pod time on the playground at different times during the week.

Early care and Beyond the Bell (after care) are not offered during the 2020-21 school year.

Staffing

All faculty departures at the end of the 2019-20 school year were voluntary and included the following:

- Retirement of 2 long-time employees
- 1 Furlough after maternity leave
- 1 Resignation due to relocation
- 1 Resignation due to long-distance commute to PMFS
- 2 Resignations due to job/life change
- 1 Resignation due to discomfort with return to campus for 2020-21

The result was a 27.5% voluntary staff reduction. These retirements and resignations allowed the school some ease with restructuring classes into vertical groupings and staff reassignments without terminating employees.

Candidates for the following positions were screened by Search Committee members and/or members of the faculty:

- Full-time Pre-Kindergarten Assistant Teacher (new hire: Linda Day)
- Contracted (hourly) Facilities Staff Member (new hire: Jonathan Perry)
- Contracted (hourly) IT Support Provider (new hire: Nathaniel Condo)
- Part-time 5th/6th Grade Assistant Teacher (new hire: Rachel Doria)
- Part-time *Volunteer* Development Associate (Linda Metzler)

We continue to search for a part-time School Nurse to supplement the (once weekly support that we receive from the Colonial School District. We are also looking for another specials teacher, either for Music or Drama instruction.

The School as a Business:

- PMFS applied for and received emergency payroll funding through the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) through the Small Business Association (SBA). The loan allowed us to fulfill payroll obligations through the 2019-2020 academic year.
- PMFS applied for and received a \$8,487 Non-public School COVID-19 Health and Safety Grant from the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit for purchases specifically related to health and safety measures taken for the 2020-21 school year.
- We continue to improve systems in all areas and “departments” of the school that offer us cost-savings, greater efficiency and reflect our commitment to energy efficiency and stewardship.
- All procedures related to payments made by and due to PMFS have been revised.
- Enrollment is currently steady at 81 students. Tuition payments support general operations.

Community Connections:

One of the most difficult challenges of this 2020-21 year is not being able to bring the entire school community together for large events. We seize every opportunity to reinvent what “gathering” looks like, utilizing *Zoom* and *Google Hangout* to bring people together. The following are some of the events planned for the community:

- Weekly Community Meetings for Worship: Thursdays at 9am (via *Zoom*)
- Virtual Admission Open Houses
- Virtual Parent “Potlucks” (evening gatherings for parents in each “class pod” group)
- Monthly Virtual Parent Coffees with the Head of School
- Monthly Virtual Evening Gatherings with the Head of School
- Monthly School Spirit Days (students & faculty wear PMFS colors or gear)
- Weekly “Stewardship Saturdays” (on-campus gardening, weeding & clean-up projects)

The PTO continues to explore options for getting families together, either in small groups or virtually.

How is the PMFS faculty doing?

The faculty, staff and administration feel the weight of the “new normal” of this school year. As a result of re-opening school in person, every school employee has additional responsibilities related to maintaining a safe and healthy school environment. Workdays are extended, as early care and after care are not offered; and all employees must check-in at screening gateways well before students arrive.

Teaching in-person and online simultaneously requires intensive planning and constant revision. We use outdoor spaces and opportunities to teach in the fresh air as much as possible. The current procedures (and pace) are not sustainable; and we are investigating ways to keep everyone as safe and healthy as possible during the upcoming winter.

Overall, the presence of the children on campus is our motivation and inspiration. Teaching and learning have been redefined and remodeled. I am honored that PMFS remains grounded in Quaker beliefs and practices and that my colleagues know and demonstrate their love for our amazing and exceptional 240 year old school through their passion and hard work.

In peace and appreciation,
Brenda C. Crawley
Head of School