

THE SCORPION SCOOP

Official Brandon Academy News



From the Head of School December 4, 2020

Dear Students, Colleagues, Parents, and Friends,

It may be hard to believe, but we are almost half way through the current school year. Very soon, semester exams for our older students, as well as seasonal activities and other December events for all our students, will be upon us. I have been in touch with our teachers to ensure that we use the time available to us as effectively as possible in the weeks before we begin the Christmas break. Still, this is a lovely period of the year to be in school, and it's an enchanting time in the lives of very young students.

This week, I attended a webinar which focused on Innovation in the classroom. There were many conversations which centered on the question of how we prepare our students to be innovators. Why is this important? It is important because, these days, the world cares a lot more about what students can do and less about what they know. I have spoken many times in these pages about the role of the teacher in the age of Google when the sum of all human knowledge now resides on one's smartphone. In fact, Google Inc. themselves look these days for college graduates, as well as college students, who are intrinsically motivated to accomplish specific tasks. These are young people who do something, not to get a good grade, but because they see the task as worthwhile. Creative problem solving, collaboration, and teamwork, things which are probably in human DNA, need to be encouraged at school. Isolation is the enemy of improvement, one speaker said. Another speaker, quite perceptively, noted that most kindergartners think of themselves as artists. However, by the time they get to 12 years old, they are more concerned with getting the right answers.

To some degree, therefore, there may be a set of contradictions between the culture of teaching and the objective of real innovation. Necessity may well indeed be the mother of invention. Some of us have to figuratively feel our back against the wall before we produce our most creative work. How, therefore, do we distill this notion to increase the possibility of producing more innovation-minded young people?

Innovation rarely happens, we are told, in isolation. Teamwork is a necessary element in the process. Teams take more risks than individuals. However, the culture of some classrooms in the past has too often been one of inaction and passivity. Chalk and talk. Some students, in certain environments, even today, develop a fear of failure, and therefore do not feel comfortable in open-ended problem-solving situations. This need not be the case, of course, and is clearly counter-productive. I think of the classrooms at BA where there is often so much effusive, creative activity that learning seems to happen by happy osmosis.

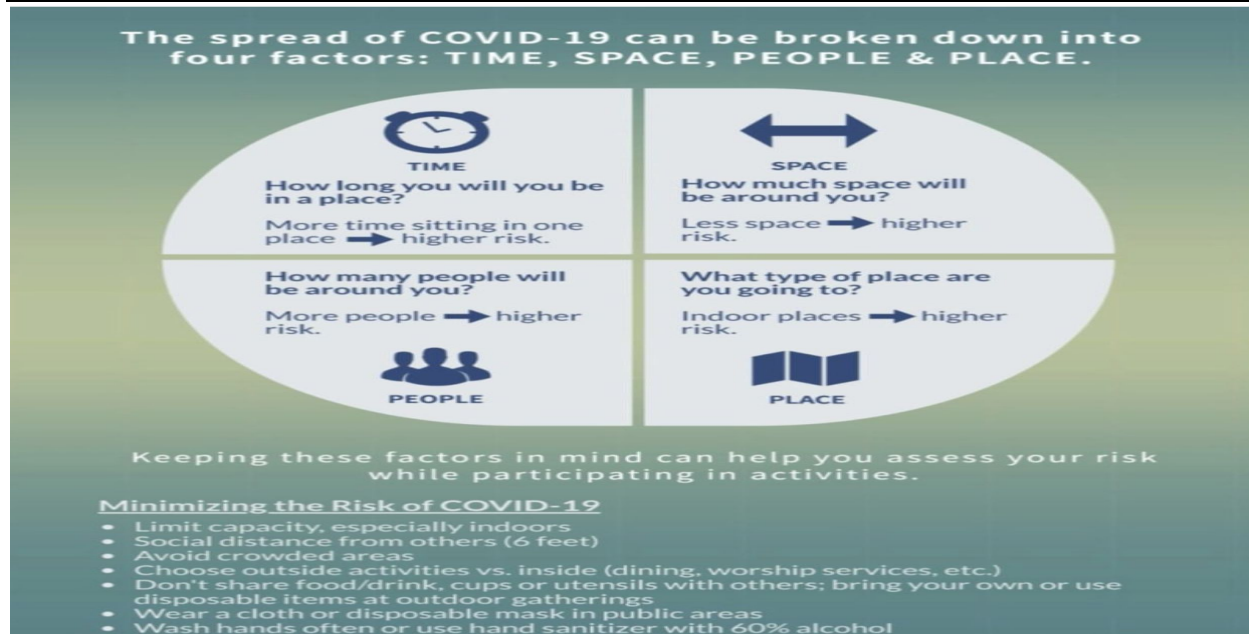
I read recently that the very successful Post-It notes, which we all use, came from a collaboration which took place during a scheduled blue-sky-thinking period which the company (3M) had purposely built into their regular work week. As we understand the importance of subject mastery, upon which all high level school examinations are based, we must also be mindful that subject matter in schools is simply the tool by which the development of one's own person and character is achieved. That is the working assumption of all good schools, ours included.

Finally, as the tundra-like depths of the Florida winter descend upon us all, I want to wish us all a productive last couple of weeks before we break up for the holidays.

Kind regards,

Eric Miles
Head of School

COVID UPDATE



Our potential COVID-19 cases remain low despite the increasing numbers in the state, and I would like to thank all the families that maintained careful protocols over the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Since the reopening of school in August, no student or faculty/staff member who has been quarantined as a result of exposure has reported any symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19. In light of this data, along with the recent update to the CDC quarantine guidelines, Brandon Academy is updating its COVID-19 protocols to shorten the quarantine period for high-risk exposures. Effective today, December 4, quarantine for high-risk exposures can end after Day 10 without testing and if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring.

Please continue monitoring your child's health on a daily basis and keep them home if they exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms. It is also important for students and families to remain vigilant in avoiding unsafe or high-risk social situations so that they do not put themselves or others at risk.

Every day of in-person learning is an advantage to our students, and I would like to once again praise the BA staff who continue to work tirelessly to make it possible. Thank you for your support and cooperation with BA's protocols for keeping our school community safe.

News You Can Use

January Lunch Order Form

[Here is the link](#) for the lunch calendar for January 2021. **Lunch orders are due no later than Monday December 14.** Please be sure to print out the calendar and turn in by the due date with correct payment. Emailed orders will not be accepted. Also, on the HB/HD day, please be sure to indicate which item your child would like to have on that day. Thank you.



Culver



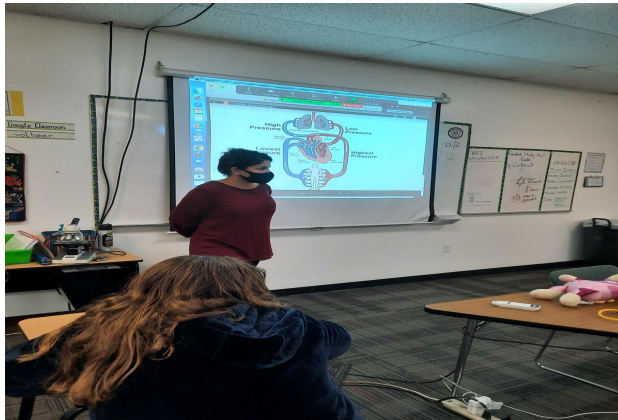
Murphy

Congrats!

We are proud to announce the graduation of Culver With and Murphy Strickland from puppy school. Both are planning to move on to the next level of training! Congrats to the proud parents.

Guest Speaker in 6th Grade

Mrs. Claudia Valdez spoke to the 6th graders in Science class on Wednesday about blood types, donation options, and CPR. She also reviewed the flow of the circulation system, showed students how to take their blood pressure, and had them listen to their heart beat. Thank you, Claudia!



Mrs. MacLaren's After School Homework Club

Mrs. MacLaren offers a Homework Club on Wednesday afternoons as her extracurricular. She has so many participants that she has added helpers to assist. She has volunteers from the high school, middle school, and fifth grade assisting students with their homework, and everyone is benefitting from the experience. Thank you to all the helpers who have added a new dimension to the program!





3rd Grade Field Trip

On Tuesday, the 3rd Grade class took a field trip to the [Tampa Bay History Center](#). Thank you parent chaperones for helping make this experience possible!

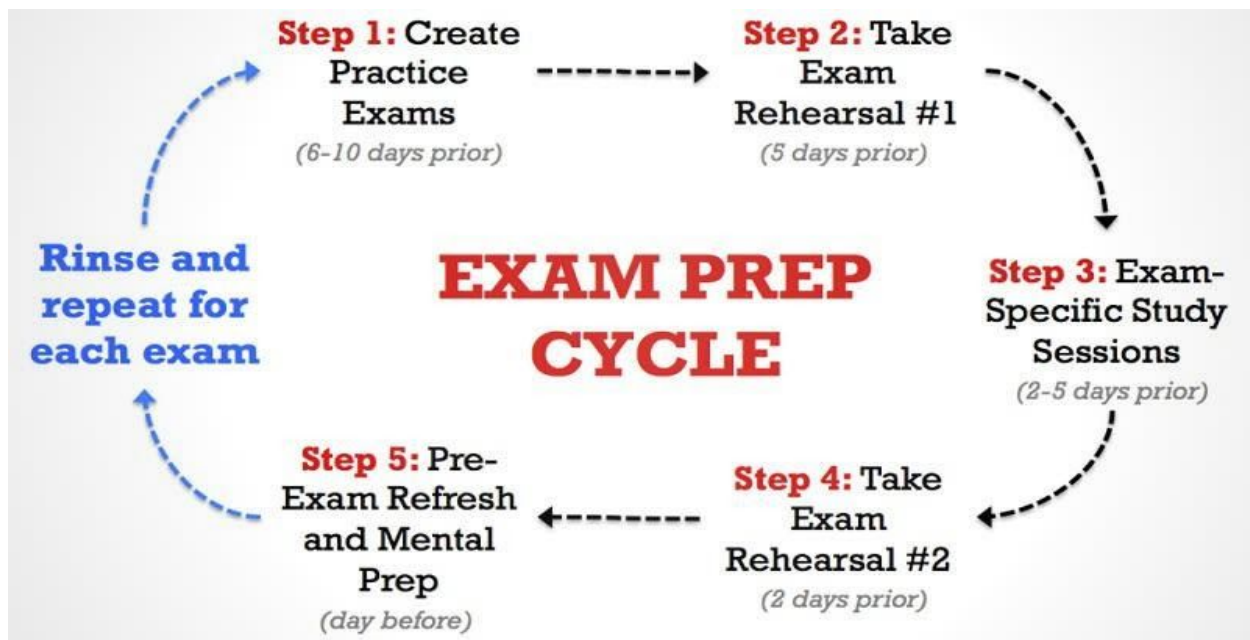


Upper School Semester Exams

As the end of the semester approaches, we would like to bring to your attention some important details. December is a busy month, especially as our students are taking examinations. As parents, you will also be able to support your child in a variety of ways:

- Provide your child with appropriate places to study and ensure that he/she uses it.
- Make sure that your child has a good night's sleep prior to examinations.
- Make sure that your child eats a balanced diet.
- Monitor your child's work/recreation balance.

Below is information and helpful tips shared with our middle and high school students.



Study Tips & Work Habits

Students should be sure that they are working productively and are reviewing their work in a systematic and efficient manner. Many subjects will require students to sit for examinations, and with this in mind, we recommend the following tried and tested advice.

General Work Habits

- Establish multiple “workplaces” (i.e., spots in your home where you can go to review/work without others distracting you).
- Make sure there is plenty of light in your “work spaces” and that it is not too hot or too cold.
- Ensure you have all materials you will need (e.g. books, pens, highlighters, planner).
- Work at a table.
- Working with familiar music is fine as long as it helps you focus – avoid having it too loud as this makes you less effective and tires you more quickly.

- Working with the TV on is NOT fine.
- When you are studying effectively, you are NOT talking on the phone or chatting with social media.
- Stay productive - after studying the same subject for 45 minutes, take a 5-minute break.

Reviewing Work for Tests and Examinations

- If you have a test or assessment, draw up a detailed review/study schedule. Work out how many days you have available and how many topics/subjects you have to cover, then set yourself times when you will work on review/study. Include social times, exercise, and fun activities.
- If you are a visual learner, it is best to rewrite or redraw notes and diagrams. If you are a verbal learner, it is best to talk aloud and try to explain in words what you are studying. These interactive processes will enable you to recall facts far more effectively than just reading or highlighting.
- When you review your work, break it down into separate and specific topics or units. Do not write down “biology”, but rather be detailed, “Plant Reproduction plus diagrams.”
- Make sure you review/study your least favorite subjects or topics first- save the best until last!!
- Try making your own key point review notes (i.e., a few summary points for every topic that remind you of other points or ideas). Use a separate notebook or index cards.
- If your mind clogs up, take a break. Exercise.

Examination Procedures and Protocols for Students

- Attendance in School - Students need to be in their testing room by the start of the midterm exam. If a student arrives late, please proceed immediately to the exam room. No additional time will be given. Students that miss an exam will make it up in January 2021 during their study hall period.
- During the examinations, students are required to observe all normal expectations, including school uniform.
- Mobile phones and all other electronic devices are NOT allowed in any examinations. During examinations, students risk disqualification if they bring such a device into the examination room.
- In the case of calculators, get precise instructions from your teachers. The proctor may ask you to display any programs written on your calculator.
- During the examinations, you must remain in your seat unless given permission to move. If you need to speak to the proctor, raise your hand, do not call out.
- When the proctor asks you to stop writing, you must do so immediately
- If you have a question, ask before the examination period begins.

At-Home Learners

AHL students have the option of coming onto campus to take their exams during the scheduled time or in the afternoon via Zoom with their teacher. An email will be going out shortly with further details.

December 2017 Semester Exam Schedule

Friday, December 11

8:00 - 9:45 High School Spanish

9:45 - 11:15 Middle School Spanish

Mon, December 14

8:45 - 10:45 Middle and High School Science

Tue, December 15

8:45 - 10:45 Middle and High School English

Wed, December 16

8:45 - 10:45 Middle and High School History

Thu, December 17

8:45 - 10:45 Middle and High School Math

High school students are dismissed from school after their semester exam starting on Monday, December 14.

We wish all of our upper school students the best of luck with their end semester exams! Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions about the upcoming examinations.

Athletic News

FOOTBALL

Congratulations the BA Varsity Football team on a very successful first season, which included a trip to the state semi-final game. What an incredible accomplishment for an “expansion team.” Many thanks to the players and coaches who believed in each other and a special thanks to Melissa Heck and the cheerleaders, the chain crew, Carlos Troche and his photography students, and to all of the BA community members that came out to support our program! We look forward to seeing you in the fall of 2021.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCCER

Both the Silver and Navy teams qualified for the TBCAL playoffs. We wish both teams the best of luck.

BASKETBALL

The Boys High School Basketball team begins their 5th season tonight at home. Tip-off is at 5pm. The team is led by Coach Walter Perkins and they are looking forward to improving and building upon their playoff win last year.