

ABVM School Adapts to New Learning Environment during COVID Pandemic

When Assumption BVM School was forced to close on March 13, 2020, because of COVID-19, students and teachers alike left thinking they would see each other soon. The stay-at-home order required students and families to adapt to a new way of life and teachers to embrace a new way of teaching.

Fortunately, Emergency Closing folders, which consisted of 5 days of schoolwork in all subject areas, had already been created for students in 1st – 8th grades in the event of snow. These were assigned, and students didn't miss a day of learning. Teachers capitalized on this time by preparing virtual lessons. As the stay-at-home period was extended, teachers were prepared to continue educating students using synchronous and asynchronous platforms.

Administration communicated with parents several times per week through Constant Contact, Facebook, and the school's internal messaging system. "Anything is possible...we are always presented with opportunities to grow and learn" was Principal, Danielle White's reaction when COVID-19 drastically, and without warning, altered the educational environment for students, teachers, and parents at ABVM School.

Teachers quickly embraced the new educational environment and identified virtual learning platforms: Zoom, Google Classroom, and Math and Reading digital resources from a variety of publishers. A single learning platform was not suitable for all grade levels, and teachers had the support of administration to use the resources that would best meet the needs of their students. Although students, teachers, and parents were hopeful that school would open, it was clear around Easter that this would not be the case.

During the spring of 2020 until the school year ended in June, teachers not only taught and supported their students but they also supported parents. Accolades from parents for the teachers' response to the pandemic were "phenomenal." Teachers understood they needed to deliver a rigorous curriculum while meeting the needs of families whose home lives were upset, too, by

COVID-19. Some parents were working overtime in the health care and other essential professions and needed to find child care, while other families were forced to create home offices for parents and quiet spaces for students to learn. This delicate dance was compounded with the financial, health, and safety worries created by COVID-19. Teachers were extremely patient, understanding, and flexible with individual family needs. The asynchronous model worked best for many of our school's families because of the sudden change in career and family responsibilities.



The 2020-2021 school year kicked off with two educational models for parents to choose from: in-person and virtual. Virtual learners are on a synchronous platform using Google Classroom to join the class and access assignments. Each model was designed to meet the needs of families during these unprecedented times.

ABVM School has not been complacent since school opened with a five-day, in-person model. A nurse is available on-site to provide health checks, and masks are worn by students, teachers, and staff. Local health trends, advice from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and ABVM School's own data drives decisions. This school year clearly demonstrates the partnership between parents and ABVM School. Parents send their children to school every day with the Daily Health Check form completed, and they keep students home who have cold-like symptoms. School cleaning

practices have been enhanced, and families who travel must quarantine if visiting hot spots. Precautions have been well received by all!

When the time comes for all students to be in-person learners, the school is poised and ready to keep the virtual aspect in place in the event a family needs to quarantine or if a parent keeps his or her child home out of an abundance of caution. The ABVM School family made the students and teachers a priority throughout the planning process to return to school and will continue to keep ABVM students and teachers the priority with all future decisions. At ABVM School, “We are in this together!”



Quick Fact Sheet for 2020-21 Assumption BVM School Year

- Opened with two educational models: In-person and virtual. (Moving to in-person model on December 1 because of noted success)
- Utilizes Google Suite Platform
- Students enjoy recess and opportunities to learn cooperatively

- On-site nurse
- Team approach: administration, teachers, parents, and students working together to keep the in-person model a reality
- Safety precautions
- Masks worn by teachers, staff, and students
- Campus equipped with sanitizing stations
- Desks spaced 6 feet apart
- Personal hygiene taught and practiced
- Signs and floor markers to promote physical distancing