

June 30, 2020

As June comes to an end, so does an unforgettable school year. I'm grateful for this community - students, families, teachers, staff - and the many ways that we leaned into the challenges before us.

The sudden onset of distance learning threw us into circumstances very few of us ever imagined and not one of us had ever experienced. It was amazing to witness, however, the many ways we continued to "be MBCI" even when we were no longer all together on campus. The kind of learning that we do at MBCI continued - thanks to the engagement, dedication and resilience of our students, and the creativity, commitment and flexibility of our teachers. I'll highlight just a few examples of the exceptional learning and community that came out of the past few months.

- We celebrate our students, their engagement with learning, and the hard work and understanding that they demonstrated. In many cases, our students exceeded expectations. By producing beautiful and often-surprising art projects, planter projects, "Stronger than Hate" presentations, mental health research (to name just a few), distance learning provided the opportunity to hear the voices of our students in new ways.
- Another unexpected, but welcome and encouraging, result of distance learning were the many expressions of care that students bestowed upon our staff. We experienced this in visible and tangible ways and we're so grateful for the character of our students who chose to check-in, celebrate, and encourage us along the way.
- While it was disappointing to cancel our annual benefit dinner, pivoting to a virtual benefit event allowed us to produce a tangible documentation of our vision at work. The video tells the story of learning and engagement at MBCI – the citizenship ceremony, projects focusing on Jesus as the ultimate example of an Upstander, reflections from our grade 12 students, a virtual choir, and our business class leading our social media campaigns. We are so proud of our students and the many ways that they learn, love, and engage with the world around them.

While I think students, parents, and teachers alike breathe a sigh of celebration to have finished well in this unprecedented school year, it does raise the question of "what's next?" We do not yet have all the answers about what September will look like.

As you may have read, Manitoba Education has proposed three scenarios for which schools should prepare: full return to class with relaxed physical-distancing; return to school with physical distancing and a blend of in-person and distance learning; limited reopening of schools with most learning taking place online with some small group in-person learning.

Our Distance Learning Team is hard at work preparing an MBCI plan for each of these scenarios. When the MB government makes the announcement on August 1 regarding a decision for September, we will be ready, and we will communicate with you accordingly.

While we hope for a return to in-person classes, we are confident that rigorous, innovative learning will continue throughout the 2021-2021 school year. Over the summer our teachers and classrooms are being equipped with enhanced technology to support our ability to teach both online and in-person. We have emerged from the steep learning curve on which we found

ourselves this spring with new tools and skills for engaging with our students in deep learning and meaningful understanding, that will continue to serve us well moving forward.

I wish you all - parents and students alike - a safe and restful summer. These past months have demanded much of our students and families and we're looking forward to being together in whatever ways September brings, rejuvenated and ready for the year ahead.

I'm grateful for the relentless love and faithfulness of God throughout this past year, and rest in that assurance as MBCI enters its 75th anniversary year.

Andrea Neufeld
Principal