



## BALTIMORE LAB SCHOOL

THE DIFFERENCE IS EXTRAORDINARY

June 8, 2020

BLS Family,

Today we applauded the accomplishments of the Class of 2020 during our virtual graduation. And while we were not shoulder to shoulder at MICA hooting and hollering as our graduates took the stage, we celebrate this unique group of young men and women who have left their mark on Baltimore Lab School, their communities and families. We look forward to watching their progress as they begin their next chapter and hope to welcome them back to Goucher Hall as graduates in the near future.

During these difficult times, I wanted to provide an update on the “state of the school” and give you some details on the evolving plans for returning to school in the fall. Before proceeding further, I feel compelled to address the social discord in our country over the recent events which left countless families and communities grieving. The Board, the faculty and staff and wider Baltimore Lab School family condemns any form of racism – full stop. We also lend our voice to those peacefully protesting for justice and reforms. A black friend shared the following with me which eloquently outlines the need for all of us to step up and be counted to address racial and ethnic injustice -

*“They came first for the Communist,  
And I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Communist.*

*Then They Came for the Jews,  
And I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Jew.*

*Then They Came for the trade unionist,  
And I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a trade unionist.*

*Then They Came for the Catholics,  
And I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t Catholic.*

*Then They Came for me,  
And by that time no one was left to speak up”*

*Martin Niemoller  
Lutheran Pastor*

Powerful...

In my address to the BLS Class of 2018, I challenged us all to go beyond tolerance. I lifted the concept from Randall Stephenson, the CEO of AT&T, as he addressed his team in 2016. I encourage you to Google “Tolerance is for Cowards”. The messages rings even truer today. Here is a part of my address -

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*In today's world it is easy to focus on only those that agree with your opinion. We can seek news outlets and social circles which reinforce our own points of view. We can become wrapped in our cocoon our single perspective. To overcome that, some people will ask us to tolerate others. I challenge you to do more than simply tolerate. Being tolerant requires nothing of you. Tolerance is for cowards - it means be quiet and don't go any further to understand the other point of view. Do more than tolerate – listen, engage and understand the other side and why they have adopted their point of view. Equally important is to challenge your perspective and give consideration that you are not seeing the entire picture.*

Respectfully, I will ask for your forgiveness as I pivot away from this important topic and shift to the state of the school. Despite the disruptions from remote learning and uncertainty about the potential restrictions for the fall, Baltimore Lab School remains financially stable. Steve Buettner and Craig Hoffman worked diligently to secure funding via the Federal Government's Paycheck Protection Program. The terms allow for loan forgiveness if the school meets certain criteria, including retaining employees. Under the current budget approved by the Board, we fully expect a majority of this loan to be forgiven in the coming months. This provides significant flexibility for BLS to make any capital expenditures needed to adjust our learning environment to meet the social distancing requirements.

The finance team also provided various "downside scenarios" for the upcoming school year by stressing multiple factors including enrollment, cultural training and new equipment. The Board has reviewed these assumptions and feels confident BLS has the financial resources to continue serving our students and community for the foreseeable future.

As to our plans for the fall, this will all depend on the requirements/restrictions mandated by the State of Maryland and City of Baltimore. This could include a combination of eLearning with a rotational schedule. Our Summer Program is moving forward in a virtual environment which is an important pipeline of perspective students. Please be patient as we work with the various stakeholders to create a plan that works for all and keeps our students, faculty and staff safe.

On behalf of my fellow Board Members, let me thank the outstanding efforts of the faculty and staff of BLS. The pandemic rolled into our world and you stepped up to the challenge and delivered with no playbook. I know you have juggled your own challenges as we closed out the school year learning remotely including your own household and family responsibilities. You have been unsung heroes in this chaos and we are so grateful. A special thanks to Steve Buettner who has been nothing short of remarkable. You have been a steady hand on the tiller during an unprecedented storm. We are so fortunate to have you leading our school with your passion and positivity.

In closing, I hope you and your family remain safe as we work our way through this time in history.

AND WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS...TOGETHER.

*"If you are going through hell, keep going" – Churchill*

Marc Wyatt  
President – Board of Directors  
Baltimore Lab School