August 21, 2020

Families and Students of Innovation Lab High School,

What a time to be opening a new school!

Bringing Innovation Lab to life was always going to be an adventure. Who knew that it would turn out to be a downright historic adventure? As events have unfolded over the past eight months—a deadly pandemic, social unrest, economic upheaval, and the need to open school in a way we’ve never done it before—I’ve continued to go back to three words that have become sort of a mantra for me. React, adapt, and overcome.

That’s the spirit of an innovator.

Despite all the challenges facing us, we at Innovation Lab refuse to stand still, give up, or succumb to despair. We are reacting to the forces that swirl around us and require us to do things differently than we’ve ever done them before. We are adapting to the brand new situation we find ourselves in. And we will overcome these challenges: building a school that empowers our students to bring out their natural leadership skills and apply them to their passions, accomplishing more than they ever thought possible.

To quote our Superintendent, Dr. Michelle Reid: “Imagine the Possibilities!”

In this packet you will find a wealth of information about the start of school and the tools we will be using this year: Clever, our new portal for accessing information; Schoology, our new Learning Management System, and a host of other things that come with moving to a new school!

The first two weeks of school this year will be focused on community building. During the first few days, the bulk our students’ time will be building community and forging strong, supportive relationships in their Crews, with some time spent as a whole school community. Working within their Crews, students will work to design and implement the processes they will use to make decisions about our school—things like our school colors and school mascot. They will also spend time learning about the features that will make their experience and education at Innovation Lab unique and powerful. From there, we will expand the community building to organizing clubs and activities, and introducing the various forms of support available to all students at Innovation Lab.

Because Innovation Lab has been designed from the start to be different, with a focus on the culture and structure of Crew as the core of our school, we have been granted

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permission to use a modified schedule you will find attached. This schedule maintains the same amount of instructional time for all of our academic classes on the same days, gives us the ability to work with our Crews on a daily basis and also builds in daily support time for all students.

As we transition to our Academic Classes during the third week of school, students will work with their teachers to establish a sense of community within their classes while they begin to explore their first projects of the school year. From there, we will embark on a learning journey together the likes of which the Northshore School District has never known.

I could not be more excited to be part of this adventure. I could not ask for a better group of professionals to share the adventure with. I could not ask for a more amazing group of students to serve. Every day I find myself musing at how grateful I am for each and every member of our little school community.

From the bottom of my heart, and on behalf of every member of the Innovation Lab High School staff, I say to you:

Welcome to the Crew. Now, stow your gear and let’s get to work!

Peter Schurke
Principal