

Every man is the architect of his own fortune.



Boys' Latin of Philadelphia Charter School | 215.387.5149 | 5501 Cedar Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143

September 1st, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2020-21 school year at Boys' Latin of Philadelphia. My name is David Hardy and it will be my responsibility to lead our school this year as the CEO. I am sure you all understand that this will be a school year like no other. The health concerns created by the COVID-19 pandemic has required us to have to navigate its dangers and react to the uncertainty it has caused. Despite these challenging circumstances, we must provide your sons with an educational program that will prepare him for college. While we believe our plan to reopen is a good one, it will make unprecedented demands on all involved: our faculty and staff, the students and you, if we are to be successful. We have the extraordinary demands that come with extraordinary situations. As I have said to our faculty, we may not want to take on this enormous job, but we have no choice.

As many of you know, our former CEO has left the school and is now in an executive role in the School District of Philadelphia. Our Board of Directors has decided to conduct a national search to select the new leader. This is a process that will be inclusive of the entire school community. The search will officially begin in October and you will receive more information about it at that time. For this school year, the Board has asked me to return as Interim CEO. I was the logical choice since I was the founding CEO and Dr. Tennant's predecessor. My job is to ensure that we continue our mission uninterrupted. But our delivery of the college preparatory education you sought when you chose Boys' Latin will be done in a different way.

We begin this year with all of our instruction delivered online. While we thoroughly investigated the other options for school reopening (in person and a hybrid model of some online and some in person), we selected what we feel is the most cautious approach. There has been much progress made in understanding and containing the virus in recent months, but with no antidote in the offing, we will conduct all classes online for the first trimester. But because we do not know when conditions will allow us to return to in person instruction, we are planning as if we will remain online for the entire school year. None of us want that to be the case, but we have planned for the worse as we hope for the best. The decision to return to in person instruction will be evaluated at the end of each trimester and will reflect the best medical advice available. But it will not happen until we no longer have color coded health advisories. Even when the advisory is green, the social distancing requirements only allow a hybrid model. We advise you to prepare for a full year of online learning.

Although we know our choice of online learning may be challenging, we also know that what will be required for your son's educational advancement does not change. You enrolled your son in our school because you expected an education that would allow him to advance to a four-year college. We know that there will be some online programs that will be far less demanding. We have not chosen that path. We will have daily, live instruction four days a week and additional outside work to be completed independently. We will track your son's participation and engagement. He cannot just show up. He must perform. We have a team assigned to address the issues of those who do not. We will address any problems that interfere with your son's ability to access and obtain our educational program. We do not want your son to experience the huge educational loss that is a dangerous possibility if he does not engage.

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It goes without saying that more will be expected of your son than in any previous year. The demands of our curriculum are substantial even when students are in person. Online requires more self-discipline, with which we know adolescent boys may struggle. That is why this year, the parent-school partnership is more important than ever. If we are to meaningfully educate your son, we need your help in two specific areas. First, we need you to talk with your son about the importance of a college degree to his economic future. The best way to describe the difference a degree makes is not by talking about the lofty salaries made by certain professions. The difference is distinct in a bad economy where people with a college degree may be underemployed. Those without may likely be unemployed. You can recover from underemployment. Unemployment is much more difficult from which to recover. A college degree is not a magic wand. It is a significant tool in your son's tool bag of opportunity. Second, you must regularly check your son's performance, both from face to face conversations with him and with regular check-ins with his teachers and on PowerSchool, our student information system. Your son needs to know that you are keeping up with his school progress on a consistent basis. This demonstrates that you believe it is important and that you will have an opinion about how much or how little progress he makes.

I said earlier that we have no choice in this matter. Frankly, we do. We can let this situation turn into a destructive period in your son's educational experience. We can avoid the difficult conversations about his progress. We can make the work easier or lower our standards to allow him to believe he has progressed. Or we can do the right thing. The right thing is not the easiest way, but in this situation, with your son's long term interests at stake, it is indeed the only way. We must work to protect his future by ensuring that he is prepared for it. The faculty, staff, and administration at Boys' Latin are committed to partnering with you in that important goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DP Hardy'.

David P. Hardy
Founder and Interim CEO