Dear Parents/Guardians,

Entering my twenty-seventh year in education and tenth year as principal of this great school, I have never been more excited to write this letter introducing the 2021-2022 school year. We are finally able to plan for our building to operate at full capacity, with all of our students and staff in person, for instruction and activities. I am optimistic that our high school community will celebrate the lessons we learned during virtual and hybrid instruction and continue to create learning environments that will support and prepare students for the rigors of high-quality education.

Though it seems like weeks away, September 9th will be here before we know it. Our first day of school is a full "A" day and schedules will be shared on Genesis soon. Our amazing teachers have been preparing engaging and challenging lessons that will assist students with review while springing them forward into the curricula that will prepare them for the year ahead.

We know that for some students, virtual instruction did not impede their positive progress. At the same time, we also know that there were some students who faced many challenges while learning virtually or in the hybrid format. Please know that our school will continue to support ALL students and provide opportunities where students can receive assistance academically, socially, and emotionally if or when it is needed.

We offered a number of excellent opportunities this past summer for students to better prepare themselves for September 9th, to name a few of them….an in-person summer school to recover credits, social/emotional groups comprised of underclassmen and upperclassmen meeting with counselors, science lab skill sessions, advanced placement course prep sessions open to any student who wanted to understand the pacing/rigor of the course, and in-person 9th and 10th-grade orientation sessions. It has been a busy and rewarding two months at the high school!

Our custodial and maintenance department continues to do great work preparing our building for opening, and they will make sure it is safe for everyone’s return. Now with that said, each one of us has a duty and responsibility to keep ourselves healthy, as well as everyone else who attends SBHS. As of today, masks MUST BE WORN while inside our building and on school buses. There are a few exceptions: such as for approved health or IEP reasons, when eating/drinking, or when engaged in high-intensity aerobic exercise. While outdoors, mask-wearing is optional. This year, students MUST show their photo ID when entering our building, ordering food during lunch, in the library, and when using our restrooms. School-issued IDs will be distributed to students the first week of school. If your child forgets it, he or she will have to purchase a replacement.

Please know that our district has a solid plan in place to support in-person instruction. We will continue to communicate with you, and we encourage you to do the same with us in return. If you have questions about anything impacting your child, please do not hesitate to contact a teacher, counselor, grade-level assistant principal or dean, nurse, case manager, department supervisor, or me. Our staff looks forward to assisting families with questions or concerns.

Last year, I used a quotation from Oprah Winfrey that really resonated with me. She said, “Doing the best at this moment puts you in the best place for the next moment.” This is such a positive message for all of us to ponder and plan accordingly. We want everyone to be prepared for the upcoming school year knowing that circumstances may change rapidly, and we may need to pivot. We must live in the “now” and look forward to the next day, the next opportunity, the next challenge.
To all of our students and families, please know that our incredible staff is motivated to connect and interact with each and every one of you. We are looking forward to building and nurturing relationships and supporting students so that they may excel and flourish. Collectively, let us decide to do our “best at this moment,” knowing that our Viking Community will be prepared for the future!

Together, we will make 2021-2022 a great school year!

Regards,

Peter Varela
Principal
South Brunswick High School