

Sixth Message from the President  
September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021

Dear IMSA Students and Families,

Please watch the video above about an Academy update. Below is the transcript:

I hope you have enjoyed the start to the school year. It has been delightful to see students and colleagues in person with our wide variety of health and safety mitigation measures. I hope you watched [this welcome video](#), which has a fun math rap, and so far I've personally enjoyed helping students with math questions throughout the campus. On August 23, we launched the year with [Convocation](#), featuring school-spirited remarks from our Student Council President, Jakob Bachhausen '22, personal reflections from alumnae Lacey Thomas '08 (keynote speaker) and a performance from Neil Wary '18. This past weekend, I hope you had a chance to participate in our annual Carnival, with fun-filled games and rides, and if you're like my children, you also had your face painted.

I imagine most of you are keeping an eye on tighter COVID regulations across the state, first with mask wearing in schools and now mask wearing in indoor settings. Professionals in schools are now required to get the vaccine. This is in response to the growth in the Delta variant of COVID-19 cases.

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation offers helpful data that illustrate trends and projections. You can see from [this graphic](#) we are at a pivotal point where conditions can become much worse if additional proactive measures are not put in place.

Therefore, IMSA will also now alter its approach in an effort to maintain a healthy community and in-person learning. First, under the guidance of the Kane County Department of Health, during the month of September, **we will conduct a COVID test for all community members on campus twice a week**, regardless of vaccination status. While unvaccinated community members have been testing positive more frequently, we have also seen vaccinated community members also test positive. Since we have been undergoing surveillance screening, we have been detecting COVID with little to no symptoms; simply put, it's not obvious when someone is a carrier. Right now, this is manageable with a positive rate below 1%, however it can get worse without proper intervention. It is imperative you share with us when a family member tests positive, particularly if that should occur

during Labor Day and your student is at home. For those students identified as close contacts, those students should remain at home and will be given access to classrooms remotely.

We have noticed a majority of COVID cases are a result of being in direct contact with family members or friends outside the IMSA community. Therefore, we will institute a few more precautions in the coming month. First, as you return from the Labor Day extended weekend, we are asking **all students to remain within their hall upon their return and not visit other halls**. On Monday, access to the main building will be limited to ensure students are within their own residence hall groups while studying and dining. We will conduct COVID testing the next day to verify health status. Second, **we will begin restricting trips home after Labor Day**. The worst case trend right now shows a national COVID case peak at the end of September with conditions improving in October, however we will evaluate week to week and adjust our protocols based on improvements in community health. I recognize this is not a desirable situation for students and families as they wish to have access to family time and home cooking. And, at the same time, I hope you recognize we must put some controls in place to limit potential spread and maintain learning in person. Recognizing the impact on potential personal needs, we will offer some accommodations. Families can arrange to see their children on campus if they first check-in with security, meet with their child outside, stay on campus, wear masks and are not in range of other students. In addition, families can request an exemption to check out their student if they have previously arranged a medical appointment or another significant need that is non-social in nature. Please submit any exemption requests to me for review [on this form](#) no later than September 9, and note our preference is the off-campus appointment is short term. While we are on campus, our Residential Life and School Leadership teams will work closely with students to keep them engaged in a safe manner.

I appreciate your cooperation and understanding during this pivotal time during the pandemic, a time when we can find the light at the end of the tunnel if we put all mitigation measures in place. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions or ideas to support our efforts.

Titans Together,

Evan

**Dr. Evan M. Glazer**

*President*

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**ILLINOIS MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE ACADEMY**

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