



May 4, 2018

Dear Parents,

As we move more fully into May and what is always the busiest month of the year, we also find ourselves getting excited about all that will culminate over the next four weeks. As the temperatures finally surge to levels that have your children outdoors and enjoying their beautiful campus, we are also working as hard as ever in and out of the classroom to finish well. Before taking a look at all that lies ahead over the next few weeks, I do want to touch on some of what we (and I) have been up to of late.

I mentioned in my last letter that I would be heading to Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, Conn., to work on its reaccreditation. I was at Choate Sunday to Wednesday of last week and learned a tremendous amount. Immediately before heading to Choate, I was in trustee meetings for School Year Abroad (SYA), which some of our students participate in every year. The opportunity to think and learn with other trustees and educators about challenges facing all schools in some way was both helpful and inspiring. The visit to Choate was particularly useful and thought-provoking, as we are closing in on beginning our own reaccreditation process next winter. Ultimately, we will spend next spring and the following school year working on a self-study before having a visiting committee with us in the fall of 2020. The time will move quickly, and the opportunity to look at ourselves thoughtfully and critically will set us up to learn a great deal in the process. We will have a number of faculty members serving on visiting committees next year to help us be prepared and get as much from the process as we can.

While I was away, I missed an opportunity that some of your children enjoyed with Abhijit (Beej) Das '91, who is running for a seat in the United States House of Representatives here in Massachusetts' 3rd Congressional District. We had our U.S. Government & Politics students, among others, in attendance for Beej's talk, and I gather that lots of interesting questions and exchanges characterized the evening. It is fun to have one of our own running for office, and you can learn more about the Das campaign at www.dasforcongress.com. We will be following how he does!

More recently, it was great fun to be with many of you who are sixth-form parents for drinks and dinner this past Friday evening. At the event, I noted that Kim and I are among you, as we are going through the final stages of the Brooks experience with our oldest daughter. So much of what has made her time here as a student fulfilling has to do with such impressive peers who have attended the school with her through these years. We are grateful for that. Furthermore, there is an astounding number of class of 2018 parents who are "graduating" this year with a final Brooks School child after having one, two, or

even three graduate at an earlier point. There are 18 families in that category! Above all, the evening allowed us to begin thanking all of you for your support, engagement, and belief in the school through your time as Brooks School parents. You have helped us be a better school.

Last night, we were pleased to formally induct the class of 2018 into the Alumni Association. With remarks from Karl Arakelian '83, P'18, P'20 and Rachael Burke '10, this year's soon-to-be graduates heard a couple of perspectives on how the school continues to matter and hold later in life. As I enjoyed the time I had with the group, it was fun to think about this graduating class and whether one of them might someday be back sharing memories of time spent at Brooks with students yet to come. It was a nice night.

As we move ahead, a lot of impressive work in the arts will culminate over the next few weeks. *Works on Paper* has opened in the Robert Lehman Art Center, and we hope you will get a chance to visit and see Austin Thomas' work on display. She is spending time on campus working with students, and the show opened last night with a reception organized by Director of the Robert Lehman Art Center Amy Graham. The exhibit will remain up through May 30.

Our Classical Concert will take place tonight in Ashburn Chapel at 7:30 p.m., and we hope you will be able to come and enjoy the work that Director of Choral and Classical Music Kenneth Griffith has pulled together with students through the second half of the year. Those of us who attended this year's admission second visit program had a sneak preview in early April, and the show is not to be missed.

We will have a series of music recitals on Sunday, May 13, at 6 p.m. in the Robert Lehman Art Center. This is always a nice event and a way to see the individual musical talent in our midst that gets little notoriety during the course of the year. Our Jazz Concert comes next and will take place on Thursday, May 17, at 7:30 p.m. in Ashburn Chapel. Along with colleagues, Claudia Keller will lead a number of groups, and all who attend will enjoy both the music and the stories behind the songs they choose. Brookstock follows on Sunday, May 20, through the afternoon outside the athletic center. Here, too, all sorts of musical talent surfaces in a festive and fun day one week ahead of Lawn Ceremony and Prize Day. The great weather we need that afternoon has been ordered. Finally, while tickets will be limited, a student production of the musical *Heathers* will run on Tuesday, May 22, and Wednesday, May 23, at 7:30 p.m. in Room X. In sum, there is a lot ahead in the arts!

In the midst of all this great work coming to fruition in the arts, we will also be working our way through Advanced Placement examinations on Monday to Friday of the next two weeks. In total, we will have 180 students taking a grand total of 337 exams over the course of these 10 days. Thus, it would make good sense if your Advanced Placement exam-taking child was feeling a bit of extra stress at this time of year! They have worked hard, and we will do what we can to keep them working and not worrying. Still, the collective sigh of relief from all 180 of them will be audible two weeks from now.

Our Alumni Weekend will get underway on Friday of next week, and we are looking forward to welcoming graduates attending anywhere between a 5th and 65th reunion back to campus. There are a few events taking place that we hope some students will be able to enjoy, and our alums always appreciate having a chance to see the school in action. We are looking forward to it.

Finally, with just 24 days standing between us and Prize Day, Kim and I are excited to have groups in the class of 2018 over to our home for dinner over the next couple of

weeks. It is fun to catch up with them, reminisce a bit, and thank them for the good work they have done in so many ways during their years at Brooks. The fact that Chipotle caters these events has a bit to do with their enthusiasm when they come in!

I will be in touch once more with a final update ahead of what will be a fun and festive weekend celebrating the class of 2018. The exams that follow for the third, fourth, and fifth form are far less fun and festive, but we will be working between now and then to get everyone ready to finish well. In the meantime, take good care and please do be in touch if I can help with anything that is on your mind.

Best,

John R. Packard
Head of School

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