



July 19, 2018

Dear Parents,

As we approach the halfway point in what I hope has been a terrific summer for all of you, I am glad to be in touch with an update about what is happening on campus. In many ways, we are busier than ever. Our summer programs are running at full speed with various student and adult groups enjoying our beautiful campus. It has been nice to see a number of Brooks students working at some of the camps, and our faculty also stays busy with conferences, courses, and preparing for the 2018-2019 school year. Thus, any notion that the campus is quiet during the summer is off the mark!

I would like to begin this letter by welcoming all of you who are new parents at Brooks. We could not be more excited at the prospect of getting to know you and your child in the years ahead. While I hope your freshly minted Brooks School child is deeply immersed in a wonderful summer, the time will come when the opening of school draws near. As the reality of beginning here comes into view, it is normal if some nervousness and excitement begin to surface. Please know that we are eager to help with questions and concerns that come along. We look forward to doing all we can to facilitate as smooth a transition to Brooks as possible.

My general pattern over the course of the school year is to write to parents every few weeks to share with you some of what is going on at school. I will also take a look back and a look ahead at any number of events or moments that deserve our attention. While there is never enough room in any one letter to capture all that is happening on our campus, I do try to familiarize all of you with the ebb and flow of the school from my perspective. Staying in steady conversation with you about the school's life helps us do better work with your children through the fall, winter, and spring.

I noted that the campus is busy at this time of year. Certainly, the construction of the Center for the Arts is the hub of our busy state. If you have seen [the story on the school's website](#) about the progress we have made, you know that we are on schedule to be in the building this fall. At a minimum, the entire project will be in much clearer view in September than it was when we finished school in early June. We will be excited to be in the space as soon as we can!

Beyond the Center for the Arts, we are also working on a couple of smaller-scale projects that will have substantial impact on the school:

First, the extensive renovation and expansion of Whitney House is well underway. I took a walk through what will be two new common areas and brand new bathrooms on both floors and was amazed at the space we have been able to create. We reduced the number of beds in the building from 29 to 25 in order to find the space we needed for these common areas and bathrooms, and we are thrilled with the new layout.

Second, work on constructing a new changing area and bathroom facility in the Athletic Center in order to be better able to support transgender students and visitors getting dressed for athletic events will also be done by the time school begins in the fall. This important step will ensure that both access to and use of our facilities are equitable for all community members and guests.

The work on the Center for the Arts is coming to fruition due to some truly extraordinary giving to [The Campaign for Brooks](#). The campaign was an ambitious \$60 million effort, and we succeeded in meeting every goal we set five years ago. Ashburn Chapel has been renovated, modernized, and preserved in ways that will allow it to serve the school for another 50 years. Anna K. Trustey Memorial Field is a spectacular venue for athletes and spectators alike. The campus infrastructure work we have done has allowed us to pedestrianize the middle of the school. Our financial aid reach has never been greater due to the many who have supported the school in this way over these five years. We have also grown our capacity to support the professional development of our faculty in ways that will impact the experience our students have. Finally, there is the Center for the Arts. This centerpiece of the campaign and the space around it will transform the experience we have in and out of doors when we are in the middle of the campus. Looking back, I am not sure that I believed we would find a way to fund all of this work, but with so many people working hard and reaching for Brooks, we have. We are excited to make exceptionally good use of what we have realized.

We find our way to projects like Whitney House and the Athletic Center by stewarding resources well and seeking opportunities that can have an immediate impact on the student experience. In recent years, we have done this with the Student Center, the Health and Wellness Center, our College Counseling Office, the Learning Center, and the Writing Center. The sum total of what will be new and improved in 2018-2019 will be particularly impactful.

Beyond capital projects, the summer allows the school more time and opportunity to take a look at its practice and try to identify ways in which we might make some improvements. I would point to two areas that are at the front of our minds this particular summer:

First, I noted in my last letter in June that we would be doing some thinking about campus safety this summer. While we do this routinely and have engaged in a range of safety drills on campus over the past couple of years, we have formed a working group tasked with looking at campus safety and crisis planning. This group will be chaired by Associate Head for Student Affairs Andrea Heinze. The areas we are looking at include: the three points of entry to the school; what to do with food deliveries and cabs; exterior doors and access to all buildings, and how to evolve our key card system, among other items. It is our hope to have some more evolved thoughts and plans to share with you next month. Again, if you have thoughts and questions about this effort, please feel free to share them with Andrea or me.

Second, a number of you joined the student body and faculty in completing a survey about counseling services at Brooks in June. With concern about adolescent mental health on the rise and documented in increasingly compelling ways, we are going to try some new approaches and programming in 2018-2019. At some point earlier in the year, I read that never before have adolescents been more physically safe and more emotionally vulnerable than they are now. This trend is worthy of our time and attention. To make some improvements with this data in mind is our goal.

Before closing, I want to recognize that my letter comes in the midst of a lot of school forms and information making its way to you. We hope that you will let us know if we can help with questions about all that we send your way. We also appreciate the time you make to complete these forms so that your children can begin the year fully registered. It is likely that additional reminders will find their way to your email inbox over the next month. Again, let us

know if we can help.

Finally, with the heart of the summer now upon us, we hope that you might be able to join us for one of our summer receptions scheduled during the first half of August. On Thursday, August 9, from 5 to 7:30 p.m., we will be in Newport, Rhode Island. Our host, Rob Walker '53, is a graduate, former faculty member, past parent, past grandparent, and honorary member of the class of 1966. It would be hard to find anyone who has as many Brooks School honors as Rob! This should be a lovely night. On Monday, August 13, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., we will be in the home of Catherine and Burt Flickinger III '71, in East Hampton, New York. Here, too, we are certain to enjoy the Flickinger's generous hospitality, and I hope that parents, alumni, alumnae, and prospective families might be able to join us. [You can learn more about both events on our website.](#) Two great places to be in the summer!

I will look forward to being in touch again at some point in mid-August with the school year fast approaching. Until then, have a slow and wonderful summer stretch! As always, if you have questions or thoughts you would like to share with me, please send them along. Take good care.

Best,

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Head of School

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