



August 15, 2019

Dear Parents,

While it feels like I wrote my mid-July letter about one week ago, we are now less than three weeks away from welcoming your children to the 2019-2020 school year. Whether you are the parent of a sixth-form student returning for a fourth year at Brooks, or a new parent just getting underway, we are excited to be closing in on what will surely be a terrific year at school. At this point in the summer, we begin transitioning out of programs we have been running since late June, and put the final touches on getting the whole campus in great shape before the first among you arrive on Tuesday, September 3. We will be eager to see you when the time comes!

In some ways, the school is busier in June, July, and August, than it is during the fall, winter, and spring. We are incredibly fortunate to have so many groups making excellent use of our campus, and the combination of our facilities staff and auxiliary programs team do an amazing job coordinating both residential and day camps and seminars of all sorts. In addition to managing the comings and goings of student and adult groups who are here for various periods of time, we also fit in a fair amount of campus renewal work aimed at improving existing facilities -- quite a juggling act! At this stage, our summer activity subsides and we turn our attention to getting the school year off to a great start.

In my July letter, I touched on work being done in Blake House and in the parking area behind the Wilder Dining Hall as this summer's headline projects. As I write, these projects are nearing completion and will be up and running by the time all of you arrive.

The work in Blake House was focused on building a new common room and new bathrooms on both the first and second floors. The common room will be equipped with some kitchen facilities, comfortable furniture, and a video system certain to be a draw. We believe the space will pull students from their rooms and into close proximity with one another for social purposes and meetings of all kinds. The new bathrooms will be a nice improvement on what preceded them, and all of this work will help us begin our first year with third-form boys living in the building together.

It has been five years since we renovated Ashburn Chapel and built the road running behind the Chapel in an effort to further pedestrianize Main Street. At the time, we knew we needed to connect that road with the road that runs to the school's north entrance. This work has been completed, and there is now a clear route running across what had been a large and confusing parking area. As a bonus, the curbing and reorganizing of this part of the campus has dramatically improved the aesthetics. If you knew the old parking area, you will be impressed with what is now there -- and less likely to get lost!

Of all these physical plant improvements, we are most excited to be heading into our first full year with the Center for the Arts online. It was incredibly fun to open the building in 2018-

2019 with a number of events and celebrations worthy of the space. To be on the verge of realizing all sorts of new possibilities in theater, visual art, music, and as a whole school community, is thrilling. We look forward to seeing you there as we get underway in September, and at events of all kinds throughout the year!

In July, I referenced receptions we were holding in Kennebunkport, East Hampton, and Nantucket. All three were great fun with alumni, alumnae, faculty, staff, parents, past parents, and trustees, all in attendance. It was nice to have a chance to update some folks who are not regularly in touch with day-to-day life at Brooks, and also catch up with a number of you who are current parents and experience the school every day. Of course, the headline is that our school is in great shape and looking forward to its 93rd year of existence with terrific students and families, a wonderful faculty, a deeply committed board of trustees, and alums who care deeply about the past, present, and future of Brooks School. Selfishly, it was fun to see so many familiar faces from my own Brooks School life and share with them the pride and good feeling I have about the school. All in all, this was time well spent!

As we look ahead to these final days of summer, I certainly do not want to be the person who pulls you away from a pace you are enjoying. Yet, I do want you to be aware of what lies ahead with the opening of school coming into view.

For starters, we will be excited to see a number of you who are parents of a new student at the home of Jeannie and Kevin Sullivan P'22, P'23, on Monday, August 26, at 5:00 p.m., in Andover, Massachusetts. We will have current parents, faculty members, and returning students in attendance. We have held this event for about five years now, and are eager to have this extra opportunity to welcome some of you to Brooks. The purpose of this gathering is to simply give you a chance to put a few names and faces together before we actually begin on Tuesday, September 3. I want to emphasize that this is not a required event, and you should not worry if you are unable to attend. We do not begin any formal orientation programming until we are in session, so please do not feel a need to reorganize your lives to join us if you have other plans and/or live some distance from Brooks. We will start at the start with everyone the following week!

We also begin our opening faculty meetings on Monday, August 26, and will remain in them through Thursday, August 29. We have time together as a whole faculty, in academic departments, with dormitory teams, and as a whole employee body. Along the way, we have time to get acquainted with our new colleagues who have settled into the area, and take on some annual training and professional development work as a group. After breaking for Labor Day weekend, we will look forward to welcoming you on either Tuesday, September 3, or Wednesday, September 4. I want to note that only athletes returning for 1st-team tryouts, student orientation leaders, and some international students will be arriving on Tuesday. If you are unclear about when you should arrive, please let us know.

If you have time on Wednesday, September 4, Kim and I hope you will be able to drop by our home on campus for a reception between 3:30 and 4:45 p.m. This is a very casual event and "moving" attire is entirely acceptable. We hope this will allow you a chance to catch your breath, chat with some other parents, and still have one more opportunity before dinner to say goodbyes as new and returning student orientation programs begin. We will continue in our orientation mode through the day on Thursday, and then open school on Friday, September 6, at 8 a.m., in Ashburn Chapel. After Chapel, we will have two abbreviated school days before beginning our first full week together. While there is no way to begin a school year seamlessly, our goal is to do all we can to get new and returning students ready to hit the ground running after a few days of settling in.

Before closing, I will make one final plea to complete any and all forms that might still be lingering somewhere in your email inbox. Thank you. And, it is never too early to make Family Weekend plans for Thursday, October 17, to Saturday, October 19. If we can help with either challenge, please let us know.

Now, I hope you return to the remains of summer, enjoy the time, and know all of us at school are looking forward to a full and exciting year at Brooks beginning in early September!

Best,

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Head of School

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