



August 16, 2018

Dear Parents,

As we move into the second half of August, I am reminded of something a colleague shared with me a number of years ago about this third summer month. He noted that for all who return to school in the fall, August feels a lot like Sunday afternoon. We are trying to hold onto the break we have enjoyed to this point, as many of us do on Sunday afternoons, yet we are increasingly engaged in the business of getting prepared to start the school year that looms on the horizon a bit like Monday morning. We hope all of you continue to enjoy what remains of the summer, as we move into the final stretch of completing projects and getting squared away ahead of the first students arriving on Labor Day. To know the enthusiasm, energy, and great spirit that your children bring to campus is just a few weeks away is exciting. We are looking forward to a terrific 2018-2019 school year.

I cannot help but begin this letter by sharing my excitement about the Center for the Arts and the incredibly impressive progress that has been made on the whole project over the past few months. I was in the building last week for the first time since early June, and left pinching myself about the fact that this will be a facility our school will begin enjoying in October. In particular, the theater is just magnificent. All of the seats have been installed, and imagining the many ways this space will serve the school for generations to come felt great. Beyond the facility itself, the outdoor space around the building will be equally impressive, and will serve a wide range of communal wants and needs. It will be so exciting to see your children be the first group of Brooks School students making great use of this project. It was built for them. What an opportunity we have in front of us!

While not as glamorous as the Center for the Arts, we are also close to completing work on Whitney House and the Athletic Center. In the case of the former, residents will enjoy brand new and expanded bathroom facilities, along with common spaces and areas to gather outside of dormitory rooms. This will substantially improve the experience for all living there. In the case of the latter, a new changing area and bathroom facility will better equip the school to support transgender students and visitors getting dressed for athletic events. This important step will ensure that both access to and use of our facilities are equitable for all community members and guests.

In the spirit of holding onto summer, it was a lot of fun to be at receptions in Newport, Rhode Island, and East Hampton, New York, over the past week. In attendance were Brooks School folks spanning the generations, and we had plenty to talk about with the completion of The Campaign for Brooks and our Center for the Arts nearly finished. The heart of my message, however, centered on your children and all they pour themselves into during the school year. There is no more important ingredient to a great school than an engaged student body intent on making the most of every year. In this regard, our school could not be in better shape.

As we look ahead to the opening of school, we will be excited to see many parents of new students at the home of Leslie and Belisario Rosas P'15, P'21 on Monday, August 27, at 5 p.m., in Andover, Massachusetts. There will be Brooks faculty in attendance, and a number of returning parents eager to chat and answer the same questions they had themselves not that long ago. We have held this event for a few years now, and it has proven to be a nice way for new students and parents to begin knowing one another ahead of the busy pace we will find ourselves in when school begins. I do want to emphasize that this is not a required event, and there is no need for concern if you are unable to attend. We structure our opening week and orientation activities in a way that allows lots of time for your child to get to know the school and fellow new students.

Also during the week of August 27, our faculty will be together for our opening meetings, some professional development, various department meetings, and an opening social event for all employees and their families. After a few months of sporadic encounters with one another, it is always exciting to reconnect and get situated to start the year well as a group. After an abbreviated Labor Day weekend break, we will all look forward to welcoming your children to campus on either Monday, September 3, or Tuesday, September 4. To be clear, most students will be returning on Tuesday of that week, with only football preseason participants, student leaders, and some international students scheduled to arrive on Labor Day. If you are unclear about when your child should arrive, [please let us know](#).

Once you are on campus, my wife, Kim, and I hope that you will have time to join us for a reception in our home on campus the afternoon of Tuesday, September 4, between 4 and 5:15 p.m. This is an open house format and a very casual event with some light refreshments and a lot of good company. We hope it also provides a nice opportunity to see some other parents and take a break from setting up your child's dormitory room! There will be a chance to say goodbye to your child after this event and before we have our opening dinner in the Wilder Dining Hall at 6 p.m. We get started in Chapel at 8 a.m. the next morning and will move from there to a half-day of classes. The balance of our opening week will involve abbreviated class days, preseason athletics, and orientation for new students. The goal will be to get ourselves up and running in order to begin the following week of school in full stride. From there, we will be on our way!

Before closing, I do want to update all of you on some safety measures we will be taking this fall in order to better secure the campus:

- We will be keeping the north entrance to the school closed with some exceptions around events that require it to be open. The hope here is to cut down on unwanted traffic entering the campus from a busy Route 133.
- We are looking at dormitory doors, windows, and key cards, in order to fortify these buildings and the ways in which people enter and exit them. This will require our students to comply with only using proper points of entry and refraining from propping open doors and windows that make the dormitories less secure.
- We will be directing all cars for hire (cabs, Uber, Lyft), and food deliveries to one central area - the parking lot behind Wilder Dining Hall. This will not be especially popular amongst our students, as it will require them to go to that part of the campus to get in the car they have hired, or pick up food they have ordered, but we feel it is important to cut down on traffic of this sort that roams to all corners of the campus.
- We will be conducting a dangerous-intruder training drill with the North Andover Police Department in the fall, and are in the process of updating our COPsync911 software in order to make sure that first responders can get to Brooks as fast as possible in case of an emergency.

While our campus continues to be an extremely safe place, our goal is to stay active in our thinking about ways to ensure the safety of everyone, and these are all steps in the right direction. As always, I would be happy to discuss any of these measures, if you would like.

While it feels like a far-off point in time, Family Weekend (formerly Parents Weekend) will be upon us before you know it. We will get underway on the evening of Thursday, October 25, and wrap up with afternoon games and activities on Saturday, October 27. We hope all of you will be able to be here for that weekend, and that we will see a lot of you between now and then!

I wish all of you a pleasant and restful finish to your summer. We are very much looking forward to seeing you and your children, as we make new acquaintances and renew older ones over the next few weeks. For now, take good care.

Best,

John R. Packard
Head of School

Brooks School
1160 Great Pond Road, North Andover, MA 01845

See what's happening on our social sites

