



October 25, 2018

Dear Parents,

With Family Weekend upon us, I am glad to have this opportunity to take a look ahead to the next few days we are excited to spend with all of you. We were just finding our rhythm when I was last in touch earlier in the month, and it is great fun to see your children pouring themselves so impressively into all they are a part of on campus. In my view, Brooks School in mid-to-late October is an impressive sight to behold.

Before getting underway with all we have been doing and are looking forward to over the next few days and weeks, I want to begin with a note about academic dishonesty. We have experienced a higher number of these cases than usual at this point. While these cases are all teachable moments, and we are confident lessons are being learned, we have suspended two students, and placed a number of others on Deans' Warning for their infractions. We devote time in class and in the form of a chapel talk given by our Academic Dean, Susanna Waters, to the importance of academic integrity. I raise the issue now with hope that you will have an opportunity with your child over the coming weekend to underline the importance of producing work that is one's own, properly citing sources, and refraining from sharing academic work with others unless explicitly permitted, or encouraged, to do so by a teacher. The school's position on academic integrity can be found on pages 3 and 4 of our [Student Handbook](#). It is always the case that we want students to ask questions if they are at all confused about what they can and cannot do. Ultimately, our goal is to steer our students in the direction of the right choices we believe they all want to make. Thanks very much for your help.

We have been busy since returning to school following a nice rest and extra day off over Columbus Day weekend. During our first week back, I was glad to have a chance to speak in chapel just a few days after a United Nations report about climate change was released. While I think I am like many who have become a bit numb to ominous environmental news, this report pointed to severe changes by the year 2040 -- when our students and your children will be in their mid-30s to 40. Thus, with hope to get all of us out, about, and appreciating our beautiful 270-acre campus in ways that might inspire us to action, I did what I have done in two prior years: I bribed everyone with the promise of a Chipotle-catered dinner. This third edition of the Chipotle Challenge asked students/employees in groups of three or more to take pictures of themselves at five of my favorite outdoor places on campus, one of their own, and to offer the school an idea to pursue that would make all of us better environmental stewards. This was great fun all around, and I am looking forward to sharing some of the pictures, videos, and ideas with all of you during my talk this Saturday morning in Ashburn Chapel. With roughly 100 participants, we will have quite a Chipotle feast in mid-November!

This past weekend, grades and comments were submitted about your child's work over the first quarter of the year. While Family Weekend is falling a bit later in the school year than we

would prefer, the timing does allow for more informed conversations with advisors about how things are going academically. By now, I trust that you have connected with your child's advisor and have set some time aside to talk about how the year has started -- in and out of the classroom. In my opinion, the advisor meeting is the most important part of Family Weekend. If we can help with scheduling this meeting, please let us know.

In chapel this week, we heard a compelling and powerful message from Glenn Hall of FCD Prevention Works. As perhaps you know, Mr. Hall has been on campus over the past two weeks working with our students on substance abuse prevention and education. In sharing his own story of addiction, Mr. Hall conveyed how important it is for all of us to do our best to engage those who are making poor choices regarding drugs and alcohol. He will be here through the end of the week should you want to attend the session he will be offering for parents on Friday.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you who are parents of third- and fourth-formers tonight in the Science Center at 7:30 p.m. This is a nice way to begin the weekend and meet fellow new and recently-new parents ahead of a full schedule on Friday and Saturday. We hope you will take advantage of the opportunity to intersperse some class visits on Friday with some of the day's programming and games running through the day and afternoon. After dinner, our football team will be playing under the lights ahead of some instrumental groups sharing their work to this point in the year later that evening.

Our mini-classes begin on Saturday at 8 a.m., and run through the middle of the morning. In abbreviated 15-minute sessions, these classes are the best way to meet teachers and get an overview of each class. In addition to sharing Chipotle Challenge footage, at 11 a.m. I will offer some thoughts on the school's state and aspirations. After that, there is lunch and a session on our internship program.

Those of you who are parents of students who have been working on "Stories from Afar," the fall season's theater production, know that the group has taken this show on the road and will perform on Friday 3:45 p.m. at Haverhill Public Library in Haverhill, Massachusetts. The final performance will also be the first theater performance in our magnificent Center for the Arts on Friday, November 9, at 7 p.m. Very exciting!

As for moving into the Center for the Arts, we are putting the final touches on the building this week and it will be available for all of you to explore and take a close look at throughout the weekend. We will be formally unveiling the space on Tuesday of next week, as classes begin to migrate in that direction from where they have been temporarily stationed for more than one year now. We are thrilled to be at this point and on the verge of realizing so much more in our theater, music, and visual art program, not to mention the difference this building and space around it will make for our community, in general. I do hope you will be able to take a look!

I will be doing some traveling once we are back from Family Weekend for the final push through the fall. On Thursday, November 1, at 6:30 p.m., we will be hosting a reception in Chicago for alumni, alumnae, parents, and friends at Siena Tavern on West Kinzie Street. This event is always a lot of fun, and I hope those of you who are within range of Chicago will be able to join us. On Monday, November 5, we will be hosted yet again by Liz and Alex Carey '86, P'19, P'20, at Doyle on East 87th Street in New York City -- a magnificent venue. Along with our Boston Reception later in the year, this is one of our two biggest events and draws alums spanning the generations. Here, too, I hope a number of you will be able to join us.

With the notable exception of athletic teams that qualify for New England tournaments, our fall athletic season will wrap up on Saturday, November 10. We will have the following week to begin transitioning to our winter afternoon programs and completing our move into the Center for the Arts. We will be construction-free for the first time in a long time when we

return in late November!

Before closing, I do want to thank all of you who have given to the Brooks Fund, or are considering a gift. As we will attempt to illuminate during our *Brooks Together* push all the way until winter vacation in December, our annual giving program delivers roughly 12 percent of the dollars we need to operate the school every year. All gifts are important, and your participation at whatever level you can reach means an enormous amount to us. To earn your support by doing great work with your children this year and beyond is our goal. Again, thank you.

I hope to see all of you over the next few days and will be in touch again in mid-November, before we head into Thanksgiving vacation.

Best,

John R. Packard
Head of School

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