



November 1, 2019

Dear Parents,

I hope all of you are well as the fall continues to move along. By and large, we have had a spectacular stretch of weather to this point in the school year, and we are pulling for more of the same until we break for Thanksgiving three weeks from Saturday. I have just returned from a couple of days in New York, and a really nice reception on Monday evening hosted at Doyle on East 87th Street by Liz and Alex Carey '86, P'19, P'20, P'23. It was fun to join a number of you, a full busload of faculty and staff members, and about as wide a range of alums as we can muster with graduates stretching from the classes of 1956 to 2019. These receptions allow us to connect and reconnect with so many who care about the school. I always return to Brooks from these events deeply appreciative of this support and the substantial wind we have at the school's back.

Before getting into some of what lies ahead over the coming three weeks, I want to thank all of you for a terrific Family Weekend. We enjoyed the many opportunities to catch up with you in classrooms, at games, and out and about all over campus. We hope the feedback you received from advisors about grades and such at this early juncture in the year has helped shape an updated approach to all that remains in this first semester. Above all, we aim to make clear to you our need and want for your engagement and partnership as we work to do our very best in supporting your children's growth at Brooks. We look forward to remaining in touch as we keep working in that direction over the months ahead.

I would not be at all surprised if your child has shared some thought about one or more moments we have had together as a community in Chapel since I last wrote to you in early October. We had two wonderful talks given by faculty members Laura Hajdukiewicz and Kenya Jones. Our FCD (formerly known as Freedom from Chemical Dependency) representative Glenn Hall spent two weeks on campus working with the whole school on the challenges and opportunities we have to confront drug, alcohol, and vaping use. The former chief justice of the New Hampshire Supreme Court, John Broderick, spoke about the importance of raising mental health awareness, and we took a step in that direction with our Stick it to Stigma day following his talk. You can access all of these talks [HERE](#). When coupled with efforts our Gender & Sexuality Alliance (GSA) took on to celebrate LGBTQ History Month in October, these talks have given us a lot of inspiration to keep working on improving the ways in which we appreciate difference, foster belonging, and support one another at our school. I am looking forward to work still to come that will ensure we remain pointed in this direction.

Before turning to some of what lies ahead, I want to highlight the incredibly impressive and wide array of student artwork we have enjoyed in the Robert Lehman Art Center over the past number of weeks. Our arts department chair Babs Wheelden and her colleagues worked hard and to great effect in celebrating much of what their students produced in just six weeks or so. It was so nice to enjoy time with all of you at our Friday evening reception during Family Weekend and have such striking work on display. Looking ahead, 200

Women Who Will Change the Way You See The World opens in the Lehman this weekend, and this work will remain on display through the middle of December. You can learn more about the exhibit [HERE](#). We hope you will have a chance to enjoy it.

In addition to a new show coming to the Lehman, we have a number of other exciting events and attractions to look forward to over the next few weeks:

- We will be hosting our final parent dinner of the fall on Thursday, November 7, at 6 p.m., in the Center for the Arts. The four we have held to date have been a lot of fun and a nice opportunity to talk about the school a bit more substantively than receptions and larger events permit. To be better positioned to know and appreciate what is on your minds as parents was a goal with these dinners. Thus, your thoughts and questions have added a lot to these events and our thinking about how to do better work with you and your children. Thank you.
- Also on November 7, William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night will open in the theater for the first of three shows, bringing to fruition the work our director of theater, Meghan Hill, and the company she has led have been engaged in since the school year's beginning. We hope you will be able to make one of these performances (November 7, 8, and 9, beginning at 7:30 p.m.). You will be glad to have made the time!
- On Saturday, November 9, we will host our Alumni Homecoming event and induct four honorees into our Athletics Hall of Fame. You can learn more about the event [HERE](#). We will get underway late in the morning and will be hosting Tabor Academy for our final games of the fall season that afternoon. Our fingers are crossed for more of the great weather we have enjoyed to date! Regardless, this should be a festive and spirited day to be on campus. If you have the time, please join us.
- We are hoping to have a couple of teams competing in New England tournaments during the week after the fall season comes to an end. In addition, the Fall Festival Choirs and Chamber Ensemble Concert will take place in the theater on Tuesday, November 12, at 8 p.m. All of the choirs and ensembles performing that evening have been hard at work since early September on the pieces they will share. Much like Twelfth Night, we are hoping many of you will be able to help us fill up our beautiful theater and provide your children who are performing the full house they deserve!

Before closing, I want to take a moment to thank those of you who have already made gifts to this year's [Brooks Fund](#) and let you know that we are looking forward to sharing more about this critically important effort accounting for roughly 12% of the dollars the school depends on each year. Your participation means a great deal to us. In addition, I want to thank those of you who have found some time to complete the parent survey you received following Family Weekend. As you know, the school is engaged in working on a self-study as part of our reaccreditation process this year. Your input and perspective on the school as current parents will help us get more out of this process than we would without your participation. If you have not yet had time to complete the survey, you can do so [HERE](#). Again, thank you for your help.

Finally, with a longer-than-usual stretch between Family Weekend and Thanksgiving Break this year, we have decided to make Veteran's Day a school holiday. Typically, I have declared a surprise Head of School's holiday at some point during this stretch in our year. This fall, however, I have come to think a planned day off with an explicit expectation that teachers assign no more than a standard, non-graded homework assignment for this long weekend will provide a more substantive break for students and faculty members alike. As we do over Family Weekend, the school will remain open, and some teams and groups will likely need to meet, practice, rehearse, etc., at some point on Veteran's Day. Yet, my hope is that this pause will allow all of us to gear up for the subsequent two weeks leading up to Thanksgiving. The "homework-light" thinking is something we will develop more as the year

moves along, and look further into having a couple of "homework-free" weekends with student and faculty wellness in mind. I will look forward to staying in touch as this thinking develops over the next couple of months.

I will be in touch again as we head into Thanksgiving Break. In the meantime, please do reach out if you have any questions or thoughts you would like to share. Hope to see you on campus as we move into November!

Best,

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