



April 13, 2017

Dear Parents,

With a few warmer days and some hope that spring will eventually settle in, I am pleased to have this opportunity to touch base about our first couple of weeks back at school following March vacation. In my view, there is no stretch in our year that moves faster than April and May, and it is hard for me to believe that we are now less than seven weeks away from Prize Day. We have a lot to do between now and then!

I want to begin this letter with my profound thanks for all the time and energy so many of you have given to the school over the past couple of weeks. I was traveling when all of my fellow Brooks School employees enjoyed the appreciation lunch the day we returned from spring break, and this was my loss by all accounts. The food, the atmosphere, the raffle prizes, and the time and culinary talent you shared so generously with the school's employees were all deeply appreciated. This is such a wonderful way to begin the spring. Thank you.

In addition to the lunch, I cannot thank you enough for the time and wisdom you all shared with our admitted students and families over the past month. I have received a number of notes from incoming parents who shared with me how much phone calls from some of you in March mattered to them. Furthermore, having so many of you on campus for our revisit days last week also made a difference, and this says nothing of the work you do in the admission office waiting room and in conversations you have with prospective families through the fall and winter. We simply would not succeed in enrolling the great students and families we will welcome to Brooks in the fall without your engagement and support. Here, too, thank you.

In and around our admission revisit days and spring snowstorms, we have had a good couple of weeks. While some wintry weather has made it difficult to get on our athletic fields, the snow and wind had no impact on our Unity Day and the many conversations our visiting speakers, faculty, and students generated during our first week back at school. With a wide range of discussion topics centering on gender identity available to students and faculty members, my sense was that everyone left the day with more in mind than was the case when the day began. To lean into these conversations empathically and listen intently to one another was the hope. I was impressed with the candor and honesty shared by students and colleagues who were in groups that I was a part of, and I finished the day feeling that we had spent the time well.

Within one week of Unity Day, we welcomed Kaylan Tildsley Alderson '03 to campus as this year's Kippy Liddle Day speaker. As some of you know, Katherine V. "Kippy"

Liddle was a Brooks School faculty member and crew coach who died in an accident while coaching the girls' crew team during its preseason in 1984. We remember her in a Chapel service each spring by inviting an alumna or guest to reflect with us about the power and importance of athletics in their lives. Kaylan's talk was exceptional, which surprised no one who knew her as a student, and began a week that ended with the dedication of the Katherine V. Liddle, our newest and most impressive crew shell. We had a wonderful gathering for the dedication, which included members of Kippy's family, and it was exciting to launch the season in such a special way.

I am on the move this week with stops in New York for some meetings before heading on to Washington for a reception there on Thursday night. I have enjoyed sharing the progress we are making with our campaign in general, and arts center in particular, at a number of receptions and gatherings this year. To share news that we will be breaking ground on the arts center in June is great fun. I will be back on campus in time for Grandparents Day on Saturday, and it is our hope that a number of your parents will be able to spend the day with your daughter or son. We have been promised some good weather for the occasion.

As you know, we will not be having school on Monday of the coming week, and it is a nice coincidence that this falls on Patriots Day this year. I hope having the day off on a holiday allows for a bit of a pause before we get right back into the swing of things on Tuesday. The second half of April always brings the closing stretch of preparation for Advanced Placement exams, which begin on Monday, May 1. In addition, as the Class of 2017 closes in on Prize Day and Brooks School graduation, a number of sixth-form students are still working through college options for next year. In the midst of all this hard work and thought, we will induct the newest members of the Cum Laude Society into that group on Wednesday, April 19, in Chapel. This annual event recognizes the school's top scholars, and it will be nice to have family members and friends with us for the occasion. On the following evening, Thursday, April 20, at 6 p.m., we will welcome parents of the Class of 2017 to a reception and dinner in your honor. While we will still be more than one month away from graduation, we do hope that you will be able to join one another as we begin to celebrate all that your sons and daughters have meant to the school. Finally, we anticipate that many of you will be back a few evenings later on Sunday, April 23, to take some prom pictures ahead of the evening's festivities getting underway. I will look forward to seeing you there!

As we look ahead a bit further, the Robert Lehman Art Center is hosting *Land & Sea*, featuring the work of Tjasa Owen '89. Director of the Lehman Amy Graham describes Ms. Owen as a "bicoastal landscape artist living and painting from her studios in San Francisco and on Cape Cod. Her paintings are inspired by her international travels, her love for coastal and inland landscapes, and by the colorful sketchbooks and written correspondence she works on daily." This work will remain up through Saturday, May 20, which will allow alumni and alumnae to enjoy it during Alumni Weekend in mid-May. The opening reception for the show will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 27. I hope you will have an opportunity to visit and enjoy the work.

While this is a very busy time of year, there is rarely a day that I am not impressed or moved by something a member of this community is doing or sharing with fellow students and colleagues. The spring is alive with activity, and we intend to take it all in with you between now and early June. Brooks School is a great place to be as the weather warms, the campus blooms, and we see and feel so much good work happening around us.

I will be in touch again as April turns to May and the pace kicks up a notch. Until then,

please feel free to be in touch with anything that is on your mind.

Best,

John R. Packard
Head of School

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