



August 16, 2017

Dear Parents,

I hope that all of you have enjoyed wonderful summers and still have much to look forward to over the few weeks that remain. As mid-August arrives and our summer programs begin to wrap up, we move actively in the direction of squaring the campus away for the year to come. Much of this work has been ongoing, of course, but it is fun to fully pivot to all that we are excited to launch. This is certainly the case with the 2017-2018 school year nearly upon us. We are excited to get off to a great start when Labor Day arrives.

When your children do return to campus on Labor Day, or the day after if they are due back then, you will find the most ambitious capital building project the school has taken on in a long time well underway. To date, an enormous amount of earth has been moved to make way for the Center for the Arts that is now well into construction. I suspect that some of you have managed to take a peek at the work over the past couple of months, and others have children involved in summer programs on campus that have done an impressive job of maneuvering around weather and construction challenges that are far from ordinary. We knew well before the project started that putting a 44,000-square-foot building in the middle of campus would be disruptive, and we will have signage for foot and vehicular traffic in place in order to ensure everyone gets around the red fences that have been up since early June. While the mode of work that will be taking place this year will evolve, the central nature of this transformative project will keep it very much in view through the fall, winter and spring.

Of more immediate impact on the school will be our new, larger and dramatically improved student center opening its doors as the year gets started. I referenced this aspiration in a parent letter I sent one year ago now, and some extraordinarily generous gifts have helped deliver the best version of the space any of us could have imagined. I think returning students will be amazed at how the entire footprint has been opened up, and new students will have the advantage of being able to enjoy it from day one. We have needed a better casual gathering space for some time, and are so pleased to be realizing this need in 2017-2018.

By now, summer registration and course assignments have all been completed and should have made their way to you and your kids. We are poised to get started with our opening faculty meetings toward the end of next week, with 10 new colleagues joining us and eager to get underway. The week prior to Labor Day weekend will be full of a wide range of meetings and finishing touches put on the campus ahead of students beginning to take up residence in our dormitories on that first Monday in September. Between early

athletics and new student orientation, we will jump right into things. This year, we have moved up the start of classes to Wednesday of that week, and we are going to try to blend our early athletic program with a few modified class days. The hope is that this will allow the whole student body to get into a better rhythm right away, and will ensure that both early athletes and those not participating in early athletics are fully engaged. Ultimately, this will position us to start the first full week of school on Monday, September 11, in great shape.

In terms of a few scheduling highlights, I would point to a reception for new students and families at the home of Leslie and Belisario Rosas P'15, P'21 on Sunday, August 27, at 5 p.m., in Andover, Mass. We will have a small contingent from school at the event, and some current parents available to chat and answer questions as well. We have found that this is a nice way for you and your children to meet some new classmates and begin to put names to faces before school actually gets moving. It is important to underline that this is not a required event, so please do not worry if you cannot attend. There will be plenty of time devoted to getting to know one another once the school year begins!

In addition, there is time set aside for all of you to join my wife, Kim, and me for a reception in our home on Tuesday, September 5, at 4 p.m. Here, too, attendance is not required, but we hope there might be time for you to drop by at some point while you are setting up dormitory rooms and so forth. This is a casual event, intended to be a relaxed way to say hello ahead of your kids beginning the school year in the Ashburn Chapel first thing Wednesday morning. Looking a little further out, I would remind you that it is never too early to make plans for Parents Weekend, which begins in the evening on Thursday, October 19, and runs through afternoon activities on Saturday, October 21. We will be trying some new approaches to the weekend this year, and look forward to sharing more on that front in September.

Before closing, I would offer that the days and weeks to complete summer reading are dwindling, and this means that reminders about finishing the all-school read, *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro, might be necessary for some. I still need to complete the novel myself! All of us are looking forward to the many ways we will be able to think about Ishiguro's work together once the year begins.

To finish, I hope that all of you enjoy the balance of the summer and are as excited as we are at school to do all we can to make 2017-2018 a tremendous year at Brooks. We are eager to meet and know those of you who are new parents, and to renew acquaintances with those of you returning for a second, third, or fourth year. We are on our way to a great year.

If you have any questions or thoughts you would like to share, please do let me know.

Best,

John R. Packard
Head of School

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