July 31, 2019

Dear Parents, New and Returning,

The new school year is imminent. I hope that you share my enthusiasm about the exhilaration of returning to school. I never tire of the rites of renewal surrounding a new school year. When else can we build on past accomplishments but start fresh with infinite possibilities for growth? A new school year is all about fresh opportunities to reinvent oneself. Not only do students and teachers build a new chronicle but the school beams with promise, purpose, and passion. It’s the time for educators to renew their vows and set off on journeys of self-discovery with eager partners in a familiar and secure territory but with new eyes and pure wonder. Oh, the places we will go, right?

This year is an especially joyful time. CCES turns sixty, more vigorous than ever, abounding with energy and enthusiasm. It’s an occasion to enact our commitment to the original vision while embracing and growing with the challenges and opportunities that we face in 2020. Beginning with festivities on our birthday, September 9, we will celebrate six decades of dedication to the Founders’ vision. CCES has stayed true to its original intent: to prepare all students for success in college through the auspices of an Episcopal culture committed to equity, inclusion, and justice for all. The thrust of our Strategic Plan propels the development of cultural competence and respect for all individuals and their cultural perspectives.

Our identity as an Episcopal school calls and commits us to foster a beloved community where all people feel that they belong. To translate the baptismal covenant into a daily fact of life, we lead off our Strategic Plan with a declaration that we will be intentional about living out our belief in the principle of inclusion. I am awed by the momentum of our Diversity and Inclusion initiative and our collateral advisory committee, led by Melanie Gordon, the school coordinator, and Sean Dogan, our board liaison, and comprised of parents, alumni, faculty, staff, and trustees. Our work was inspired by the counsel of Juan Johnson, whose brainchild, the Diversity Leaders Initiative, sponsored by the Riley Institute of Furman University, has enriched civil discourse and galvanized social and economic gains through partnerships among community leaders throughout our state. Melanie will periodically report progress in practices and results.

We welcome a new senior administrator, Dr. Angela Allen, to our leadership team. As the Assistant Head for Curriculum and Instruction, Angela advances the pace of integrating the services of the Achievement Center into the full spectrum of curriculum and instruction. She is the ideal fit to consolidate student support services within the framework of the oversight of instructional methods and curricular content and aims. It’s rare in schools to find an opportunity to upgrade by combining instead of adding administrative roles. In discharging her role of curriculum and instruction leadership, Angela also orchestrates the implementation of the Strategic Plan, coordinates the academic leadership team and the operations that they govern, and convenes the department chairs, with special focus on curriculum review. Angela will collaborate with her academic leadership colleagues and department chairs to deploy professional development to strengthen pedagogy and augment instructional strategies.
Angela adds deep and extensive school administrative experience to our high-functioning team. Angela served from 2015-2019 as the Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, VA, that includes oversight of 30 schools. I assure you that she has hit the ground running (aptly, she is a runner).

Our new Middle School Director, Kate Fagan, is a proven school leader, an assistant principal at 29 and a principal of one of the highest performing K-5 schools in Indiana, with 600 students. Her leadership hallmark is relationship building among all community members, a result that she and her team achieved last year when Kate served as the Director of the Achievement Center. Her imprint is already felt in the Middle School. Kate and her new Assistant Director, Hamilton Parks, bring energy and a focus on cultivating emotional intelligence, a sound moral compass, and academic growth at a critical stage of a young person’s maturation.

I want to share with you the upgrades in security on our campus, which have been carefully planned to be consistent with our respect for freedom and hospitality. Nevertheless, we do not live in a bubble. Like you, prudently, we adopt measures, often technological, that heighten protection without the appearance of a fortress environment. Disciplined financial management produces funds transferred to a maintenance reserve to finance these capital improvements without any reliance on serial fundraising campaigns.

- The most prominent change in the campus landscape is the installation of three gates at the Cavalier Drive central entrance. Community members will be asked to attach barcode stickers to their rear passenger window for scanning and automated entry at one entrance gate, another gate will admit visitors who sign in and submit their driver’s license for sexual predator review and visitor badge issuance, and a third exit gate will require badge return before exiting. This process will work smoothly to allow free passage of community members and rapid scrutiny of visitors who do not have bar code stickers. This familiar entry system unobtrusively adds an additional layer of security.
- LED lights have been added to the Lower School parking lot as the final installment in replacing all exterior campus lighting with LED technology.
- Bullet-resistance film has been wrapped around glass door entrances to increase response time in the event of intrusion.
- Middle and Upper School entrances have been redesigned to improve visibility of interior lobby areas for receptionists.
- Joining Donna Hayden as a receptionist in the Lower School, Tammy Watson, a veteran Lower School teacher, will greet and direct visitors and provide enhanced customer service. Since Donna covers a lot of territory in delivering people, items, and messages to classrooms, Tammy is firmly stationed in the commons ensuring the presence of at least one receptionist at all times of the school day.
- We have installed an access card reader at all entrances to McCall Field House.
- Numerous security cameras have been installed throughout the campus to upgrade surveillance.
- Each classroom will be supplied with a tourniquet kit and training in case of emergency.
- We have contracted with Rave Mobile Security to install an app on each employee’s cell phone to communicate an emergency to 911, onsite leadership, and/or first responders.

Further upgrading security, we have improved end-of-the day processes:

- Physical presence in the Welcome Station will be extended until 3:15 (formerly 2:30).
- Car pool gates will open at 2:15 (formerly 2:00).
- Upper School gates will be opened at 3:00 (formerly 2:00).
- Security personnel will monitor Primer/Lower School playground areas during departures.
We have invested in campus infrastructure upgrades beyond security provisions:

The US chemistry labs have been refurbished. McCall Field House has been refreshed with a full interior paint makeover. We are converting the softball field to a practice field for lacrosse and soccer to allow athletes to complete practices two hours earlier for those who otherwise would have had late practices. Both the track and the tennis courts are being repaired thanks to three generous donors. An approximate ten year shelf life is normal for those surfaces to be playable. And, thanks to the vision of the new Middle School Director, the interior of the Middle School has a new crisp, uncluttered look. It should inject light and cheer into the surroundings. To heighten the coolness factor, in the Middle School we have replaced four HVAC units. We are able to fund these campus enhancements through gifts and our reserves.

Throughout the year, while he completes his tenure at the Baylor School, our Head of School-elect, David Padilla, will be visiting the school. His trips will be designed for him to gain a working knowledge of processes and initiate relationships. His visits will revolve around school wide events--Homecoming, Chrismon, a monthly Parent Organization meeting, and CavFest. He will see the school in its many rhythms and hues, images of connection and happiness. And, many will have a chance to meet David. He will have the latitude to improvise and take advantage of an enticing class or gripping conversation. If you miss him this year, rest assured, David will meet you in his first year as Head, beginning on July 1, 2020.

I plan to make the most out of every hour of the 19-20 year. There is a place for everyone at CCES--to serve, to cheer, to advocate, to educate and be educated, to offer a vision. This community subscribes to a can-do, glass half-full, where there’s a will, there’s a way outlook. Lend a hand, share an idea. Let’s make the year, our 60th birthday year, with hearts and hands joined, the best yet.

Yours very truly,

Leonard Kupersmith
Head of School