



July 25, 2010

Dear Middle School Parents:

As I sit in my rearranged Middle School Office thinking about my new role as Middle School Dean, I am excited about getting to know more intimately and earlier these students who will soon populate the Upper School. The Valwood campus is well designed to allow the separation of these developmentally very different groups of students, and it is my intention with the help of Vallye Blanton, Mary Ann Saliba, and the rest of the Middle School Faculty to continue much of the student centered activity created by Jay Riven as well as take advantage of this change in leadership to uncover ways in which we together might enrich our Middle School experience. Since I arrived I have always reached out to meet with the eighth grade, and our Transitions course will certainly continue and may expand. I have already begun to meet with the rising 6th graders to talk about their exciting move into Middle School. For all of you parents who are new to Valwood's Middle School, please try had to join us on Thursday, August 5, from 6:00 – 7:00 pm for a reception and a panel discussion featuring parents of past middle-schoolers. It should be fun, provide a good chance to meet other parents, and an opportunity to get questions answered from multiple perspectives.

Perhaps the most important thought I wish to posit with all parents is that my door is always open. I arrive at school quite early in the morning and will spend the first part of the day in the middle school. I also hold periodic parent coffees for which I will send out postcards, and these provide a social chance to sit with me and other parents to chat informally with no agenda other than that which arises. If you wish an appointment please call Jean at 7432, but please feel free to drop in to share a thought any time you want. I do have experience with this age at other schools and with my own four children, so let's talk.

Summer offers the opportunity, like the Roman God Janus, to look backwards at the just completed year as well as forward to the new one soon to start. I hope you found the NetClass software useful in allowing you to follow your student's progress in classes as well as keep abreast of assignments. While most of our communications have evolved into the electronic mode, please understand that personal channel is still alive and well with advisors, teachers, college counselor, and Dean. Please don't ever hesitate to contact any of us if you have questions or want to share what you are seeing at home. I am very excited about the new faces we have hired to the faculty for next year: Norma Cloud is a former parent who went back to school to become certified and will teach World History 1 and AP World; Bobby Stephenson has just earned his Master's degree and will teach AP US History and World History 2 and help coach wrestling as well as Model UN and Mock Trial; Brad Feldman completed a math major at Elon College and will teach AP Calculus and Pre-Cal; Lindsay Herring has a theater major and manages Mathis Auditorium, and she will teach Drama, Speech, and coach Literary and One Act; Leanne Bennett was the starting shortstop on a national champion college softball team and a former police officer, and she will join us to coach Varsity and JV softball. These new people all bring talent and commitment to our faculty.

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Each year there always seem to be a few areas in which we want to place extra emphasis next year, so I would add these thoughts:

- Dress code is described in the Handbook, and failure to comply will result in a parent being called to rectify the situation, so please oversee it ahead of time.
- Punctuality is essential in the real world, and your help is essential in getting to school on time.

I would like to highlight a few important events at the beginning of the school year:

- Thursday, August 5: 6:00 – 7:00, MS Reception and panel discussion (RPH)
- Monday, August 9: 11:00 – 2:00, Senior Day
- Tuesday, August 10: 2:00, 9th grade orientation for all students and parents (RPH)
2:30, NEW 10th-12th student orientation (RPH)
3:00, Middle School orientation for all students and parents (RPH)
3:30 – 5:30, Open House for ALL Middle and Upper School students
- Wednesday, August 11: 8:00 am, OPENING CONVOCATION, all students in Eager Sports Center
Monday Dress required.
- Monday, August 23: 6:00 pm, MS/US Open House for parents.

As I begin my 45th year in education, I have established a few goals for myself and the division, one of which is to find ways to hold students more accountable for their behavior and performance. Your support in structuring your child's time for study, dress for school, good manners, and punctuality will go a long way towards helping him or her maximize their talents right from the start. Everybody comes back with a clean slate, so it is important to establish a routine right from the beginning, because it is so hard to come back from being behind. The school-home partnership is essential to our mutual success, and I appreciate your efforts to work with us. Please make sure that summer reading gets started early, as teachers are quite serious about using it in their classes and will check its completion by papers or tests. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any suggestions, questions, or concerns.

I am looking forward to a terrific upcoming year...enjoy the rest of your summer.

Chuck Glassmire
Middle School Dean