



Dear Parents,

### **150 Years and a Summer Update**

If you have been on campus lately, you've likely noticed many changes, most notably the new Upper School Academic Building. Other projects include the renovation of the Tyler Hall, with new lockers, office spaces, and eventually new floors to be installed later this month. Our Middle School Library and Lyceum have also had structural changes, and we are looking forward to seeing how this space enhances the Middle School experience. Fresh coats of paint, new gates, and the delivery of books and supplies for our students can be found all over campus. What an incredible time to be a part of the Porter-Gaud community!

Even with all of the growth in facilities and enhancements to our programs, we look ahead to celebrating our school's legacy of 150 years of education. While the school has seen its share of changes throughout these 150 years, faith, honor, and knowledge continue to be evident in all we do. I hope you join in the excitement of marking this 150<sup>th</sup> milestone over the course of this school year.

While we miss seeing the students on campus, the break affords us time to examine our existing programs and curriculum and work on faculty training as well. Several of our faculty have engaged in professional development opportunities. Bob Irving attended the Computer Science Teachers Association conference in Baltimore, preparing to develop new courses of study for our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. Hannah Van Syckel is currently attending the North American Cambridge Classics Conference in San Antonio. Our History department examined assessing writing and reviewed the curriculum scope and sequence during a summer workshop. The World Languages Department met for a week-long training in Proficiency-Based Language learning. Al Wilson was the recipient of a Parents Guild Wish List trip and spent a week exploring the Grand Canyon. No doubt his hiking and camping on the recent 8<sup>th</sup> grade Outward Bound trip prepared him well for his outdoor adventure! Chris Tate served on the advisory board for the Collaborative for Spiritual Development: Educating for a Democratic & Ecological Society and presented at the Southern Association of Independent Schools Dean Symposium. All of these experiences are the result of being at a school that's committed to the continued development of its faculty and staff – what a gift!

### **Summer Reading – For Parents**

By now, hopefully your students have begun their work on summer reading. I enjoy the time summer offers to catch up on reading and have a few suggestions for you as parents! I am grateful that several of these titles are recommendations from parents and colleagues. The

books on this list by no means answer all of the questions raised by the challenges of being a parent and educator, but they are thought-provoking. And, because I'm a diehard basketball fan, I couldn't help but include the final suggestion on the list, which includes lessons of persistence, hard work, and drive.

- *Homesick and Happy: How Time Away from Parents Can Help a Child Grow* by Michael Thompson, PhD
- *The Gift of Failure* by Jessica Lahey
- *The Collapse of Parenting: How We Hurt Our Kids When We Treat Them Like Grown-Ups* by Leonard Sax
- *The Smartest Kids in the World: and How They Got That Way* by Amanda Ripley
- *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* by Daniel H. Pink
- *The Legends Club: Dean Smith, Mike Krzyzewski, Jim Valvano, and an Epic College Basketball Rivalry* by John Feinstein

### **2017-2018 School Year**

During the first week of August, we will mail home student schedules and more detailed information for the coming school year, including introductions to the dynamic new faculty we've hired. You will also receive links to our Student Handbook, which includes the policies and procedures for the Middle School. However, you may find the following information helpful in preparation for the school year.

- Supply Lists for grades 6-8 and Summer Reading and Optional Math Work are posted to the website. You may find them until the "Important Files /Downloads by Division" section of the website.
- Uniform Guidelines are posted to the website with ordering information for Lands' End. Please note the following – the black skorts, shorts, and PE pants from previous years are included in the Middle School PE dress code for grades 5 and 6. Students are required to purchase the new PE t-shirts and the maroon shorts/pants are not included in our dress code.
- Save the Date for our Back to School Event on August 17<sup>th</sup>.
  - 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Orientation 4:00-6:00 (Gwynette Auditorium)
  - 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Orientation 4:00-4:45 (Gwynette Auditorium)
  - 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Event 6:00-7:00 (Wendell Center)
- Opening Day of School is August 22<sup>nd</sup>
  - Students should wear regular uniforms on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and Chapel dress on Wednesday.
  - Drop off in MS/US carpool begins at 7:30am and pick up in MS/US carpool begins at 3:15. Carpool procedures will be reviewed at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Parent Orientation.
  - The first bell rings at 7:55 and the day concludes at 3:15. Most students arrive between 7:35-7:45 and find the time to get settled in the morning helpful in starting the day in a positive way!

- After School care for Middle School students is available through our Auxiliary Programs. Please contact Corey Colman at [ccolman@portergaud.edu](mailto:ccolman@portergaud.edu) for more information. Please note students may not be unsupervised on campus after 3:15.