



August 2019

Dear Upper School Families,

I hope this finds everyone enjoying some relaxing time with family and friends this summer. A native of Connecticut, and having logged a decade in Miami in grad school and at my first high school teaching job, I have now lived in Annapolis for about 15 years with my wife and two daughters. It seemed time to finally get to Ocean City! We had a blast. I'll say that the Thrasher Fries are as good as people told me, and my younger daughter now likely has the five-millionth sold Ocean City Lifeguard red sweatshirt!!! It was a great family trip, a nice reprieve from the heat, and a way to build some new memories.

No matter what I'm doing, or where, school is never too far from my mind. The summer has been full and busy, with building student schedules, supporting faculty professional development, continuing to monitor our successful recent roll-out of a new schedule, thinking big-picture about our educational program into the future, and more. An annual highlight for me is always meeting all of the new families joining our Upper School community. I can say with such confidence that the students joining us are talented, scholarly, kind, and passionate, and will grow what is already a great community of learners.

We do have a new faculty member joining us, as Susan Shields retired at the close of last year. Susan was a part-time teacher, and Matthew Nespole's commitment to our art program is shown through his support of us hiring a new teacher in a full-time position. I'm excited to welcome **Cassandra Kapsos** to our faculty. After a significant search that brought candidates to our campus from all over the country, we are thrilled to add such an experienced, thoughtful, collaborative, and gifted teacher. Cassandra has a B.A. in art and design, as well as an M.F.A. in photography and digital arts from the Maryland Institute College of Art. She has held the position of adjunct professor at the Community College of Baltimore County for the last decade, been a visiting professor at St. Mary's College of Maryland, and has held high school teaching positions at both Randallstown High School in Baltimore County and Severn School here in Annapolis. Cassandra is excited to begin her work, and asked for her keys

before the summer even started so she could get in the classroom and begin to plan! I know we all welcome her to Key.

It is also an exciting time for so many of our faculty who are welcoming new babies into their families, and of course we welcome those “soon to be Key-Wees” into our Key community! Jen Bowman will continue to be on maternity leave into early October, Alyssa MacMeekin is due this week and will take time in the early fall, and Brad Feldman and his wife are expecting their second baby in September. As with every maternity and paternity leave, we work hard to bring in the very best long-term substitute with the same teaching experience and confidence as our faculty, to make for a smooth transition. That work has been ongoing, and I will be communicating separately regarding the specific plans, to all families with students in those classes.

Below are some **important nuts and bolts** as we get into the year, including the time frame on sharing student schedules. We look forward to seeing all new Upper School students for Orientation (all rising ninth graders and all new students across other grades) on Friday, August 23, and the whole school community on Monday August 26 at 8:15 a.m. in the Activity Building for the first day of school.

I hope everyone has a safe and relaxing remainder of the summer, and if you have any questions or would like to touch base, I hope you'll reach out.

Regards,

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Upper School Head

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- On the [Parent Portal](#), which is accessed by clicking on the "Parents" tab at the top of [Key's homepage](#), you will find the **Forms, Letters, Lists, & Resources** page, sorted by Division, which contains Upper School forms, textbook lists, etc. The deadline for online completion of the **Magnus Health** forms for your children, also located in the Parent Portal, is fast approaching. Lastly, the 2019-2020 Student/Parent Handbook can be accessed in this same location, and it is a helpful clearinghouse of information, policies and resources.

- We are putting the final touches on **student schedules**, something that takes a considerable amount of time given the varied nature of the many different electives all students take. They will be available by August 19, if not before. Please look for an upcoming separate email about schedules.
- **New students, including ALL ninth graders**, are invited to attend the **Upper School New Student Orientation, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon on Friday, August 23 in Katharine Hall**. We look forward to seeing all students new to the Upper School at this event, which is led by our older students.
- All Upper School students and faculty will congregate on the first day of school, **Monday, August 26 at 8:15 a.m.** We will have an opening gathering in the Activity Building and share information pertinent to the opening week of classes and extra-curriculars. Students will at this time receive a hard copy of their schedule for the first week of school.
- The annual **fall Outdoor Education Program class trips** will be upon us very quickly once the school year begins. These trips are integral to our academic curriculum and important in terms of building community across the School. These trips will run from **September 11-13** for all grades. More information will follow, but please mark your calendars.
- Students will have an opportunity to sign up for **Activities** at the Activity Fair in the opening weeks of school. The various activities will be introduced, and there will be time for students to choose activities with the guidance of their peers and advisor. Activities will begin in early/mid September, and activity blocks prior to that date will be used for extra meetings of advisory groups, class meetings, student/faculty check-in time, office hour visits, and full Upper School assemblies to help get the new school year started.