

January 2009

Dear Parents

Happy New Year! Turning the calendar onto 2009, we look forward to the end of one semester and the beginning of another. I'd like to bring you up to date on several new and recurring events.

Official Notifications

In December, we received official notification from the Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association that our re-accreditation has been approved through December, 2015. The Commission enthusiastically endorsed HGP's commitment to academic excellence and mission and praised the "culture of teamwork" that permeates every constituency of the school including the parents and students. "Everyone chips in to get done what needs to get done." I can think of no higher praise for our entire community.

Exams & Course Selection

Semester exams are scheduled for January 13 through 16. Detailed exam schedules are posted under the "Quick Links" tab on the HGP website. Please remind your sons of the necessity of the more intensive review necessary for these exams, a review that is a key part of preparation for college. This review is especially important for our ninth graders going through the experience for the first time.

Second semester begins on Tuesday, January 20. For current juniors, sophomores and freshmen, second semester means that it is time to consider course selections for next year. Academic departments will begin making their recommendations and approvals for honors and AP courses. Students and parents should also be aware of the full range of elective courses which we have developed over the past few years. More specific information and deadlines will be included with the mailing of semester reports.

Continuing Kudos

Congratulations are due to Fr. Chris McDermott and the HGP Theater for a fine production of *The Boys Next Door* last month; to Mrs. Vilsmeier and all of our music students for the Christmas Concert; to Mr. Ryan & Co. for a successful Charity Ball which raised funds for international and local mission projects; and to Messrs. Figliola, Culnan, and Murtaugh for winning the GMU Patriot Tournament. Good luck as well to our winter coaches as they enter the thick of their seasons. These accomplishments provide concrete evidence of our commitment to the "development of each student's unique gifts and talents."

Safety & Security

On Friday, December 5, the HGP faculty devoted part of our in-service to two important issues: safety and security and bullying in schools. As a follow up to the safety workshop, we held a practice lockdown on Monday, December 15. The entire exercise lasted 22 minutes and becomes part of our continuing

commitment to enhanced safety and security on campus. The workshop on bullying in schools featured extensive presentation and discussion on applications to the HGP community and served as continuing examination of our responsibilities as educators to maintain a safe campus for all students. Our newly adopted policy on bullying takes effect on January 1, 2009. The policy makes more explicit our ongoing commitment to respect all members of the HGP community. [The policy statement is posted under the "Campus Life" section of our web site](#) and now becomes an official part of our Policy Handbook. As always, we welcome your communications about any or all of these topics.

Parent Education and Communication Series

The next workshop coincides with spring sports registration on **Monday, February 9**. A panel of parents, students, and faculty from the Risky Business Team will host discussions at 7:00 and 8:00 PM in the Chapel **Parents of juniors and seniors are reminded that attendance at one of the three lectures in our series by at least one parent is mandatory for a student to be able to attend the April HGP prom.**

Thank you for your own continuing commitments to our community. All the best for continuing success in 2009.

In one heart and one mind,

Michael A. O'Toole

Principal