



ST. EDMUND'S ACADEMY
WILLIAM L. KINDLER, PH.D · HEAD OF SCHOOL

KEEPING IN TOUCH

December 9, 2011

Greetings,

HAPPY HOLIDAYS as we begin the final week before the annual Winter Break. Even though it is not mathematically at the halfway point on the calendar for the 2011-2012 school year, I have always felt that the second half of the school year begins when we return after Break - this year on **Tuesday, January 3, 2012.**

These past few months have been filled with so many projects and special undertakings in addition to the normal daily school operations. In this final letter of the calendar year, here are some important items to share with you.

- Ms. Sara Forder, Academic Administrative Assistant, will be departing in mid-January to begin her formal studies in pursuit of a nursing career. Sara has been such a valued member of our professional team that we will surely miss her collegiality and talents, but we know that she will be very successful in the nursing profession. Ms. Anne Vey becomes the newest member of the SEA professional team in this position. She has returned home to Pittsburgh from several years in various educational positions in Philadelphia, the most recent as the Faculty Administrative Assistant/Graduate Office Receptionist at Chestnut Hill College. Anne holds a B.A. degree in English Literature from Skidmore College. Anne will begin working with Sara starting Monday, December 12, and continue until Sara's departure for the purpose of providing as seamless transition as possible.
- We are within one year of hosting the PAIS and MSA Accreditation Team in their role of conducting SEA's ten-year full-scale accreditation evaluation. The visitation dates are November 11-14, 2012. The Self-Study Standards sections are rapidly reaching their draft deadline with every committee fully focused on the content expectations and timelines. The effort is exhaustive, but very rewarding, not only for what we continue to learn about our institution, its programs and operation, but also the benefits that come with the intensive collaboration among our professional team across the three education divisions. A team of SEA community members will interact with personnel of the Institute of School Management (a national consulting firm) to finalize the community survey to be completed by parents online during the first two weeks of March. You will receive detailed information on a more frequent basis beginning in January regarding the accreditation process and especially on the parent survey, which we need you to complete.
- Many of the new programs and services offered this year are proceeding as planned with specific updates contained in expanded communications starting with second semester in mid-January. We wanted to "live" them the first semester to really have a sense of their impact on our students' total experience.
- A new, exciting robotics course is being launched second semester in our Upper School, taught by an adjunct robotics specialist. Again, you will shortly receive further information on this new program.

- We are also meeting with a group of parents to create a more formalized home and school partnership to increase additional learning opportunities for our students through the wealth of talent and interest that exists with so many of our parents. We are very serious and enthusiastic about extending our interaction with parents where appropriate and feasible.
- Our two Admissions Open Houses in November and December were highly successful in both attendance and serious interest. At this time, we have more than seventy fully completed admission applications for the 2012-2013 school year. This number is far ahead of previous years, especially at this early time of the normal inquiry cycle. The extremely high number of inquiries, scheduled tours, and applications with deposits on file, is placing a high priority on the Board of Trustees and the Administration to seriously determine what is the optimal enrollment number of students within our increasingly limited facilities to provide for “inspiring learning and teaching.”

As we gather steam to enter 2012 with the physical, mental, and emotional energies to continue on this 21st century educational journey and the multitude of initiatives and tasks that are already in place, those about to start, and those still in the planning stage, St. Edmund’s Academy has subscribed to the NAIS’ **A Guide to Becoming a School of the Future**. One of the goals of the NAIS Commission on Accreditation Committee on Schools of the Future has been to reconcile what the literature suggests about the need for educational change and what heads of schools are saying about the success of schools without change. The Committee took into account the tension between tradition and innovation by engaging at the outset in an extensive research project involving a study of perspectives on all sides of the questions. NAIS and we believe that everyone has an obligation to examine the research, ask for themselves what schools must do to prepare students for the future, and to adapt accordingly in ways that are consistent with the school’s mission. Throughout the next few months, I will be addressing the seven “Essential Capacities for the 21st Century” that have been identified in the NAIS work and discuss ways in which we, the St. Edmund’s Academy community, can and should work together to assess, plan, and implement these capacities as they truly relate to our students and their preparation for their future.

Now, I wish for you and yours a safe, healthy, and joyous holiday break, which begins at the close of school next Friday, December 16. During this special time of the year, please be generous with your “hugs and kisses” to family members and special friends, as well as extending a warm and caring hand shake of goodwill and peace to all.

See you on Tuesday, January 3, 2012.

Gratefully yours,

Bill Kindler