



July 20, 2009

*The world is all gates, all opportunities, strings of tension waiting to be struck.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Dear Episcopal Collegiate School Families,

As another summer approaches its end, I hope that your family was able to find the time to build and share family memories and replenish your energies. There is no doubt that the school calendar can be a great blessing to all of us. It allows time for closure, renewal and new beginnings.

While walking our campus these past few weeks, I could not help but wonder whether or not we would be ready for the opening of school. I have to admit that I have the same anxiety every year about this time and continue to be amazed that ambitious plans and projects crammed into less than three months of time always get done. Of course, with the opening of the new Lower School, this year presents a unique set of challenges. I am pleased to report that everything is on schedule. As Emerson so eloquently reminds us, it is again time for new beginnings and opportunities.

With the opening of school, there are always some administrative matters which need to be discussed.

### **Back to School Materials and Division Letters**

Please read carefully the enclosed *Back to School* materials. We regret that the materials are somewhat voluminous but the fact is that there is much to get done at the beginning of the year. As we migrate to a new website platform and upgrade some of our internal database software, we are hopeful that much of this can be done on-line next year.

### **Campus Traffic**

Even though the Lower School will be on a different daily schedule with classes starting at 8:00am and ending at 3:15pm, there will be an increase in the amount of traffic on our campus, especially during peak drop off and pick up times. To maintain a safe environment for our young people, it is imperative that we follow the drop off and pick up procedures, which are enclosed in this packet. Even if you are a returning family, you need to read our new procedures. Please remember that the campus speed limit is 10 mph and that cell phone use while driving on campus is not permitted.

### **School Web Site ([www.episcopalcollegiate.org](http://www.episcopalcollegiate.org))**

We anticipate that we will launch our new web site by the start of school. Until then, please continue to use our existing site, which has been updated with important dates and back-to-school information. Although our launch will be several months later than we had planned for, we do believe you will find our new site to be much more user friendly.

## **Handbooks**

Our Family Handbook provides an overview of school life and a summary of the School's major policies and procedures. The Handbook will be available on our web site by August 1 and at registration. All families (new and returning) will be asked to read this important information pertaining to school life. In addition, we will be publishing an Athletic Handbook, which will also be available by August 1 on our web site. Your family will be asked to read both of these documents so that everyone in our school community begins the year with the same expectations and understandings.

## **Health and Safety**

Similar to any new school year, our school community must be prepared for health related-issues which may arise during the school year, especially when you have a community of more than 700 living together so closely. This year will be no exception. In particular, the H1N1 (swine flu) virus remains a threat and virtually every national health organization is recommending that school communities be prepared to respond. We are in the process of developing and finalizing the steps we will be taking. Those steps will include emphasizing at the start of the school year good hygiene practices that we can all employ to minimize the possibility of spreading infectious disease. We will also ensure that there are sufficient infection prevention supplies available on campus. In addition, our classes and cleaning crew will be working together to ensure that our working spaces are frequently cleaned and disinfected.

## **Grade 6-12 Advisory Program**

During last school year, we gathered an unprecedented amount of data from our school's constituencies regarding the Episcopal Collegiate School experience. That work has helped crystallize the unique advantages of our school. In particular, our school community continues to define as one of Episcopal's great strengths its commitment to the individual development of each Episcopal young person. In that regard, we are introducing a strengthened advisory program for students in grades 6-12. Faculty advisors will serve as mentors, role models and advocates for our students and the first line of contact for parents. We have added a Dean of Students in each division to help ensure that this program will have the focus that is required to make it successful. More information about our Advisory Program will be communicated to you during the first few weeks of school.

## **Looking Ahead**

As I have shared with you, the community research we conducted last year will serve as the foundation for our strategic priorities. In my September Headmaster's Report, I will communicate with you many of the key initiatives that we will be undertaking over the next several years.

As we begin the School's 12th year, I remain excited about this wonderful school community and what the future holds. I look forward to working with you in the year to come.

Sincerely,



Stephen D. Hickman  
Head of School

