

October 14, 2021

Greetings Episcopal Collegiate School Families,

It is hard to believe that Wednesday marked the completion of the first quarter! By all accounts, we have had a tremendous start to the school year and are poised to maintain that momentum throughout the fall. I have been so impressed by our students and teachers. They work hard, care about each other and the world around them, and engage fully in the life of the school. I have observed this in so many ways - lower school students "making their mark" by sharing inspirational messages across campus on International Dot Day, middle school students initiating community celebrations of world cultures, inspiring chapel talks from seniors that reflect wisdom beyond their years, and teachers providing coaching and encouragement throughout every corner of our campus.

Our Boys' and Girls' Cross-Country teams are ranked #1 in the state. Boys' Tennis won the state championship while Girls' Tennis finished as the state runner-up. Volleyball is currently ranked #1 in the conference, and a win on Friday night will position our Football team to host the first round of the playoffs! Furthermore, the stage for our fall play is under construction, our choirs and orchestra performed their first live concert in 18 months, and our monarchs have completed their annual migration! It is certainly an exciting time to be a Wildcat! As we head into the second quarter I wanted to provide you with an update on some of the school's strategic initiatives.

First, the health and safety of our school community remain our top priority. I am pleased to share that throughout the first quarter we had zero cases of Covid-19 reported in our highly vaccinated (more than 95%) seventh through twelfth grade student population. As the number of active cases in Pulaski County continues to decline, we feel that it is safe and appropriate to make adjustments to our mitigation strategies, particularly for our vaccinated students. We will share a more detailed update the week of October 25th after confirming the community's health post-fall break.

Second, in our efforts to nurture an inclusive school environment in which every student can experience the strongest sense of belonging, we have continued our partnership with Dr. Derrick Gay and are working to implement the initial set of recommendations developed from last year's climate surveys and contributions from constituent task forces. Those recommendations have been posted to our website. Our faculty and staff have benefited greatly from professional development workshops conducted during in-service and afternoon faculty meetings, and those educational opportunities will continue throughout the year. I am delighted that Dr. Gay will join us on campus on December 9th and 10th to connect with students, faculty, parents, and alumni. It is important to note that we plan to extend climate assessments to our parent and alumni constituencies to ensure that all voices and perspectives are incorporated into this work.

Lastly, I am also excited to share that we have initiated a strategic planning process that will generate a long-range view of future school objectives and priorities. In order to help inform and guide this process, we have partnered with Ian Symmonds and Associates, an innovative research and strategy firm for independent schools, colleges, universities, and non-profit organizations. Recognized as one of the nation's foremost strategic educational consulting firms, the company has worked with more than 300 independent school and college clients throughout 48 states. I have had the opportunity to work with Ian Symmonds and can attest to the quality and benefits of his collaborative and research-based approach. We are just beginning the "planning to plan" phase and there will be more to share in the months ahead. I have no doubt that the overall effort will yield a strategic plan that is consistent with Episcopal Collegiate School's mission and core values while ensuring that our students are optimally prepared to lead and thrive in a rapidly evolving collegiate and workplace environment.

I hope that you and your family are able to enjoy a restful and rejuvenating fall break! We are so grateful for your ongoing partnership and support and are looking forward to another great quarter of teaching and learning!

Respectfully,

Dr. Jamie Griffin
Head of School