



February 2015

Dear 5th Grade Students,

As you move toward the end of your final year in the Lower School, this is a good time to look at what lies ahead in Middle School. Though we are preschool through 12th grade under one roof, each division has its own personality, its own unique environment, and its own age appropriate set of expectations. As a fifth grade student, you probably feel quite comfortable in the Lower School, but you are most likely ready to embrace the challenges and responsibilities in our Middle School.

So what might be different for you next fall? First of all, you will become part of our Middle School learning community. Instead of a homeroom teacher as your guide, you will have an advisor. The advisor will most likely be a teacher in at least one subject as well as your advocate in every aspect of your school experience. There will be more movement as each subject is taught in a different classroom. Instead of being led to classes by your teacher, you will be expected to find your own way from class to class. The responsibility of getting to the right class with the right materials offers an important sense of freedom and independence. Most importantly, as you journey through your middle school years, you will be expected to assume more and more responsibility for your own learning and behavior. Certainly, your teachers will assist with your academic and social maturity, but the ultimate responsibility rests with you.

While the classes will continue to be small and the relationships with teachers will continue to be close, the Middle School offers some broadening opportunities for students. Sixth graders get to choose what foreign language to study, whether to sing in the chorus, what sports to play each season, and whether to join an instrumental ensemble. Some students participate in our theatre program or the chess team, while others serve on "Big Mac," our Student Council. Add to these opportunities the chance to select your own club each term or go to school dances, and you realize that, in addition to broadening your academic horizons, the Middle School offers a myriad of opportunities for social and emotional development. There is also a wonderful three-day trip to Outdoor School in the spring that feels like summer camp but provides the comfort of sharing the experience with your school friends and teachers.

Our Transition Breakfast for **parents** will provide a better glimpse into the Middle School; therefore, I encourage all parents to attend. A light breakfast will be available at 7:45 a.m., followed by Mr. Lisk, Head of School; Mr. Taylor, Head of Middle School; Mrs. Ziemer, Assistant Head of Middle School and Middle School Dean sharing their experience and insight regarding Middle School. The program will end with Middle School faculty members and students fielding questions from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. The breakfast is scheduled for **Thursday, March 19th at 7:45 A.M.** in room 111. Please mark your calendars now. We are also planning an event for **students** in fifth grade to hear from other students and some Middle School teachers about what to expect next year. This will probably take place sometime after spring break, when the prospect of the transition seems even more imminent.

The COURSE SELECTION GOOGLE FORM will be available on the 5th-grade WH 1 page under "downloads" starting March 19, 2015. You must log on to your school email account to access the page. Completion of the form requires parent input. Deadline for submitting the information is March 30, 2015. The School will need updated medical information, but in order for a physician's physical exam report to be valid for both the sixth grade state required physical and the Pennsylvania Independent Athletic Association (PIAA), please schedule your exams to be completed after June 1, 2015. More details about forms and procedures will be shared on March 19th.

If you or your parents have any questions or concerns about your transition to our Middle School, please call or e-mail to arrange a time to meet.

Sincerely,

Victor Taylor
Head of Middle School