



March 2018

## *Head of School Update*

Dear Parents:

The energy and excitement on campus always begins to build this time of year as the warmer weather welcomes more outdoor activities, and thoughts about summer begin to make their way into the minds of students. PACS is having another great year with some exciting initiatives ahead of us. Here are just a few highlights.

Lower school students scored 97% above the ACSI average for all schools nationwide, with math test scores making the biggest gain by increasing 34% over last year. We implemented a lower school science laboratory this year (our incubating chicks hatched yesterday!) that we plan to expand over the summer, and our three-year high school standardized test score average continues to surpass the state's third ranked Oconee County, and that includes all our juniors' and seniors' test scores, and not just the college bound students recorded by the public-school system.

Our fine arts department's One Act Play placed in the region competition for the first time in the school's history, and athletically we've had multiple winning teams with varsity football posting a 12-2 record and an appearance in the state semifinals. Both the varsity boys' and girls' basketball teams won region championships this year, which is another first in the school's history.

Expansions to our school's discipleship programming this year included new overnight spiritual retreats for high school students with a continued emphasis on day retreats (and in most cases, off campus) for the other grades. [Messages](#) heard by students in our upper

school chapel services are now posted on our school's website for parents to listen to, and we have been e-mailing chapel follow up discussion questions to you in the Wolverine Weekly.

Looking forward, in an effort to continue to push our high school students into more advanced, critical thinking, cloud-based coursework, we will be replacing all iPad tablets with a 2 in 1 combination tablet and laptop device next year. We will also implement the use of the new 2 in 1 device in a controlled, phased approach with next year's 8th grade students. These IT initiatives are in response to a recommendation from our recent reaccreditation by the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS), which is the most rigorous accreditation a school in our region can earn that we also recently achieved for the first time in our school's history. Our academic dean will be writing you more about this IT initiative later next month.

Strategically, as we begin to enter our fortieth school year, we need more permanent instructional space to replace our aging modular buildings, and we are on the cusp of announcing a new and exciting capital campaign this fall. Speaking of raising money, thank you to those who attended our annual spring gala at Athens Country Club on March 13; with 253 attendees and \$88,400 in gifts it was the largest and most successful in our school's history! Reenrollment for next year has stabilized at 92.3%, and 90.2% of teachers reported they would like to return next school year if offered another contract – very impressive numbers for any independent school indicating a thriving, healthy family-school environment.

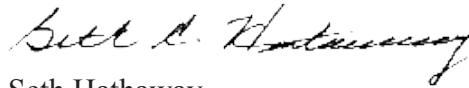
Reports of school violence nationwide have increased,

and we have been taking measures to continue to improve campus safety. In addition to mandatory fire and hazardous weather drills, we also practice campus intruder/lock down drills (our most recent one was last Monday). We have ensured that members of the Oconee County Sherriff's Office are on campus during our lockdown drills to critique our performance. We consistently change the days and times we run these important drills to introduce new scenarios for teachers and students to respond to, and the sheriff's office routinely states we have a model program. Much of this success is attributed to the caliber of students at our school, their respect and response to authority which is taught in your homes, and a vigilant and responsive faculty who understand that your child's safety is their number one priority, every day. We are currently installing security cameras inside and outside the school to proactively surveil our surroundings and improve safety. The live footage from these cameras can be viewed by select members of our administrative leadership team anytime, on or off campus, from any desk-top work station, tablet, or phone. These are new and necessary precautions to increase the safety of our students.

In closing, we have a great number of school events and ceremonies between now and the end of the school year, and we hope you will attended as many of these as your schedule allows. Spring break begins after school this Thursday, just in time to celebrate

Good Friday, the day we remember how Jesus willingly suffered and died for our sins (1 Peter 3:18). This Sunday we are thankful to celebrate Easter, the glorious celebration of Jesus' victory over sin and death, signifying resurrection for all who are united to him by faith (Romans 6:5). Enjoy next week with your children, and we look forward to having them back on campus Monday, April 9, as we begin our final push to the end of the school year!

Warm regards and in His service,



Seth Hathaway  
Head of School

References:

Guttek, G., 2011. Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education, p. 238.

Other Head of School Letters to Parents

[Student Centric Learning](#)

[Standardized Test Scores Are Up...Way Up!](#)

[Families: Better Connected but More Alone](#)

[Strategic Planning](#)

[It's Not What You Know It's Who You Know](#)

[Embracing Change While Remaining Christ Centered](#)