



January 10, 2014

Dear CCSC Students, Parents, and Guardians,

Happy New Year! It's difficult to believe that we're nearing the end of our first semester, which officially marks the midway point in our school year. I hope your holiday break was restful and celebratory. Everyone at CCSC – students, faculty, and staff – had certainly earned it. It has been a while since my last letter, so I wanted to write you all with some updates on the goings on around here.

As I hope you've been hearing from your child, we have placed a new emphasis on gathering in large groups as a community this year. In late September, we had our first of the four community meetings that will take place this year. All Upper School students gathered together and were led through a full program by some senior MCs. Perhaps most touching, students end these meetings with "shout-outs" – to their peers, their advisors, their teachers. These are heartfelt and genuine, sometimes even emotional. And I remain amazed at how articulately CCSC students reflect on their experiences, showing a deep understanding of why we are all working so hard day in and day out. Similarly, our Lower School students gathered by grade, sharing experiences, engaging in friendly competitions, showing their spirit, and giving some shout-outs, too.

The day before Thanksgiving the entire school headed to the MIT gym for a pep rally, a well-established annual tradition. It was wonderful – full of energy, spirit, and a collective feeling of appreciation for each other, and thanks. The event included a student-faculty basketball exhibition, which the students won. (It was, though, just an exhibition, so the faculty's winning record in actual games remains untarnished.) We were pleased to welcome back about 30 alumni, who came to cheer and reconnect with old friends and former teachers.

Students and faculty then handled the always challenging stretch between Thanksgiving and the winter break admirably, maintaining the momentum gained and pushing hard. On December 20th, we again gathered in large groupings for our second community meetings of the year. High School students headed to the Volpe Center auditorium, where the program highlight was the reading of college essays by five of our seniors. Each was well-written and touching – about loss, resilience, overcoming obstacles, and the excitement of confronting the challenges that are coming after graduation. These gatherings serve to build spirit and provide a forum for asking, and often answering, questions about our collective identity. Who are we as a school community? What do we stand for? Why do we work so hard? Of what are we most proud? What defines us as individuals and scholars? I love seeing students shine in these spaces, demonstrating talents to date unseen and courage that is inspiring. We will next come together for our Black History



Month assembly on February 14th at MIT and I want to invite any interested parents or guardians to join us. We will share specifics about the event closer to the date itself.

IMPORTANT REMINDER ABOUT MIDTERM EXAMS AND SCHOOL SCHEDULE

The final day of Semester 1 is Friday, January 24th. Leading up to the midterm exams, which will take place on the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th, students will engage in an active and comprehensive review of the semester's content. These exams are very important, and I sincerely hope that students understand as much and take them seriously. Please reinforce this message at home. **The accompanying handout explains the midterm process and schedule in depth.** Take some time to review it, and reach out to your child's advisor if you have any questions or concerns.

Following midterms, as returning families know well, students will get a bit of a break between semesters; Monday, January 27th and Tuesday, January 28th, are days off for students and faculty work days. Staff will use the 27th and 28th to meet, reflect, and plan. Classes resume on Wednesday, January 29th for the first day of the second semester.

ENROLLMENT LOTTERY FOR 2014-15

We will soon hold our second lottery for the upcoming school year. If you know of friends or family interested in attending CCSC, urge them to complete an application and submit it by the January 22 deadline. We expect most of our seats to be filled for next year once we run the January lottery.

I appreciate your taking the time to read this letter and your commitment to staying in touch and involved. Should you have questions, please do call or write. I hope 2014 is a great year for members of the CCSC community.

Caleb Hurst-Hiller
 Head of School

