



December 10, 2014

Dear students, parents, and guardians,

Welcome to December. I hope you enjoyed the Thanksgiving holiday with family and friends and found some time to relax and recharge. As is now tradition, our entire community celebrated one day early over at MIT. More than 360 students and over 60 faculty and staff gathered in the gym for our annual Pep Rally. About 20 CCSC also alumni joined us for the fun. Highlights included a student victory in the student-faculty hoops scrimmage, a spirit parade by the members of our athletic teams and extracurricular activities, an energetic performance by our talented dance team, and a round of cheers led by the seniors in their new Class of 2015 jackets. And we also spent some time reflecting on all for which we are, and should be, thankful.

As I shared with students, I believe that the stretch of time from the beginning of the school year up to the Thanksgiving vacation is the toughest one -- for students, for teachers, for staff. Students new to our community must adjust in different ways. There are few days off or long weekends. The work is challenging and the effort must be sustained. I expressed how thankful I am for all in our community who have put in so much time and energy in order to successfully make it to the vacation. This feeling of thanks, of course, should also be extended to all of the parents and guardians who are working so hard behind the scenes to support our scholars. This work is difficult. Anyone who says otherwise is likely choosing to ignore the truth. It takes hours and hours and lots of grit and stamina. We engage together and we celebrate together. I stressed to students and staff alike that it is *because* of our commitment, day in and day out, that it is so easily justifiable to forego a half-day of classes for a community celebration as we do at Pep Rally. It is one of my favorite events of the year and it did not disappoint.

I also spoke with students about what's ahead: a critical *and awkward* three weeks before the longer winter break. Gaining and sustaining momentum is tougher this time of year with holiday distractions. Faculty and staff will be helping students stay focused during the period leading up to two weeks of vacation. And to keep students' skills sharp, teachers are busy planning rich and substantive vacation assignments in every class across the school. When students return in January, we will have a two and a half week stretch before our Semester 1 examinations. Pushing hard through the end of the semester and locking in an excellent GPA is critically important for everyone.

Our fall sports seasons wrapped up a few weeks ago and our basketball teams are now practicing hard for their long seasons. We pride ourselves on high extracurricular involvement at CCSC, believing that students should take part in at least one extracurricular per year -- to develop leadership skills, to expand social circles, to explore new interests, and to bolster college applications. Last year, over 75% of our student body participated in at least one. This year, we've set the goal of 85%. If your child is involved, encourage her to try a second (or third, or fourth...) activity. If your child has not yet joined a team or club, insist he does.



Please take some time to review the important information below:

- Enclosed is your child's Quarter 2 Progress Report. Please take the time to review it together. Ask these questions and others: "What is going well?" "What is not?" "Why?" "What's the plan for moving that B to an A-, that C+ to a B?" "How, in the remaining 5 weeks of the semester, will you finish strong and ensure that current F doesn't appear on the report card?" Be involved. Push your child. And if this report indicates that your child has been doing well this semester, please, please praise him or her. Your praise will be well deserved and is an incentive to keep excelling for the rest of the year.
- Our first lottery deadline for new students to enroll in 2015-16 is Wednesday, January 14. Please help us spread the word among your friends and neighbors, and make sure you apply for any younger siblings. We will hold an open house on Thursday, January 8 at 6 p.m. Ms. Swanson has lottery application forms at the Bent Street reception desk, or you may download one from our website.
- Our winter vacation will be two full weeks. We will have an early release on Friday, December 19 (11:30 dismissal) and classes will resume on Monday, January 5, 2015.
- As we head into the stretch of the school year when the likelihood of snow days grows, I wanted you to know that we alert families via email and automated phone messages as soon as the decision is made to cancel school. In addition we post cancellations on the local TV stations (WBZ/CBS, NBC, and CW) and on the school's website and Facebook page.
- Midterm exams are approaching (January 21-23). You will be hearing from Ms. Rieser, Dean of Curriculum and Program, about the specifics after we return from the winter break.
- January T-pass renewals and meal orders are due *before* the upcoming vacation. Please submit payments by Thursday, December 18th at 4:45 pm. T-pass payments are always due by the last school day of the month. You may turn in payment anytime during the month. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Smith.

Thanks, as always, for taking the time to review this letter and the contents of this mailing. I wish you a safe and relaxing winter holiday. We're excited about what 2015 will bring for the CCSC community and I sincerely hope that you are as well.

Sincerely,

Caleb Hurst-Hiller
 Head of School