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January 26, 2017

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

*Translated copies of this letter are available at [www.ccscambridge.org](http://www.ccscambridge.org). Thanks for reading. Kòpi tradi lèt sa a disponib sou [www.ccscambridge.org](http://www.ccscambridge.org). Mèsi dèske w li l. Las copias traducidas de esta carta se encuentran disponibles en [www.ccscambridge.org](http://www.ccscambridge.org). Gracias por leerlas.*

Happy New Year! I hope 2017 has started well for you and yours. After a long and hopefully rest-filled two-week winter break, we returned to school on the 9th and got right back to work. Wearing both my school leader and my parent hats, I took some time to take stock and consider our current status. What did we do well in 2016? What should we endeavor to change in 2017? I am sure you engaged in similar exercises. As a community of educators, we engage in this type of reflection all the time -- on our lessons, our meetings, our interactions with individual students or groups, our systems and policies, and more. And while it promotes a culture of continual improvement, it can also stifle appreciation for where we are and what we have. I continue to be so proud of the school we have created. As we start a new calendar year, I hope you feel similarly about the school community you have chosen for your child.

Last week, students took a second set of benchmark exams. These assessments double as midterm exams and serve to provide teachers with critical information -- What have students mastered? What still requires practice? What skills need sharpening during the second semester? Faculty spent part of Monday and Tuesday thinking about this information and incorporating it into their planning for the coming days, weeks, and months.

Importantly, these exams also formally close first semester grades. As laid out in our handbook, semester one and semester two grades are averaged to calculate yearlong grades in each course. A strong semester one grade sets students up for a solid final grade. A lower mark means that students have their work cut out for them in order to finish the year with the grade they want. In the words of Ms. Hairston and Ms. Mederos-Dorleans, "grades are money." Higher GPAs almost always yield better financial aid packages and more scholarship money. With rising college costs, securing aid funds is of critical importance.

I noted at the end of the first quarter that we pride ourselves on our consistent communication with parents and guardians. Every single family should receive a call from your child's advisor in the next week or so. I hope you will use this call to check in about academic, social, and behavioral progress. Celebrate what is working and spend time articulating concerns. If you do not receive one, please reach out to Ms. Norris or Mr. Nomani. They will ensure you do receive a call.

Here are some important announcements. Thanks for reading closely.

- **Student Recruitment for 2017-2018** -- Our efforts are underway. Word of mouth is the best form of advertisement. Please help spread the word to friends, family, and colleagues. Flyers are available at our front desk. Applying online is simple. Visit: <http://ccscambridge.org/apply>. Families that apply as early as possible have the best chance of securing a seat. Our first enrollment lottery was held on January 25<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for our next lottery is March 1<sup>st</sup> at 4pm.
- **Parent Guardian Association** -- On Tuesday, January 31st, CCSC will host our 3rd PGA meeting of the year to discuss Counseling/Difficult Conversations with Teens. Open to all CCSC parents and guardians, the PGA was created to support the efforts of CCSC, provide resources and information to enable parents and guardians to help their students succeed, and facilitate ongoing communication with the school administration and faculty. More details on the event can be found on our website and on our Facebook page.
- **Coffee with the Principals** -- New this year, your principals have been holding a monthly drop-in coffee hour, usually the fourth Friday of the month. There is no set agenda: these one-hour events are a chance for families to ask questions or offer ideas to Ms. Norris (Middle School Principal) and Mr. Nomani (High School Principal), and learn from other families who share their experience of having children at CCSC. Three of these have already happened and family attendance has been strong -- thank you! Please mark your calendars for 8:45 AM Friday, January 27th. We hope to see you there.
- **Model G20 Summit** -- New this year, 15 high school students will be participating in a five day Model G20 Summit at Harvard University in partnership with the GiantBug Foundation, the China Education Symposium and the Harvard US-China Economic Interaction Council. Working alongside their peers from renowned high schools in Boston and from China, students will attend lectures by some of the best professors in the world, practice diplomacy skills, learn the art of negotiation, team building and more with exciting networking dinners and fun group activities included between lessons.
- **We will not have school on Monday, March 13, 2017** in order to give students and staff a bit of a break during this typically long and taxing stretch of the school year.

As always, I am deeply appreciative of your time and energy supporting the work of our school. Reading this letter, reviewing your child's report card, and engaging with your child about how he/she is doing is an important component of that support. I hope 2017 proves a great year for you and for CCSC.

Sincerely,



Caleb Hurst-Hiller  
Head of School