

UUAA 2.23.20

Up Up And Away - Notes from the Upper School Director

February 23, 2020

I hope everyone is well rested after Rodeo Break—because the final trimester of the year often feels like a sprint! I spent the latter half of break touring colleges in California with my daughter. It is a bit scary as a parent to envision one's eldest flying the coop, but it does provide perspective on our students' journeys from middle school to high school and beyond.

I believe that our graduates are prepared well with the knowledge, work ethic, and integrity to navigate that journey successfully. But there's always more that we can do as a school in bolstering our students' readiness while paying close mind to their social and emotional well-being.

To that end, I am heading back out the door this Tuesday, along with Ms. Hart, our Lower School Director, to attend the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) national conference in Philadelphia. I can't wait to dig into sessions on topics like evaluation, experiential learning, instructional coaching, and school culture.

I will be away from campus from Tuesday morning through the end of the day Friday, February 28. I will check my school email periodically, but feel free to reach out to Matt Teller, Brendan Sullivan, or the appropriate teacher or staff member if you have a pressing matter in the meantime.

In part due to my trip, report cards won't go home until Wednesday, March 4, but final grades for the second trimester should be viewable electronically through PlusPortals by tomorrow morning.

Events This Week:

● Tuesday is **Mardi Gras**, which is celebrated in Upper School with a pancake-eating contest during Break as well as a free pancake and sausage lunch for students, accompanied by a high school steel drum band. *Laissez les bons temps rouler!*

- The next day is, of course, **Ash Wednesday**, and in order for us to have a full Mass service, we will flip the Wednesday and Thursday academic schedules for February 26-27.
- **8th grade students** - Please wear your purple 2020 graduation t-shirt to school on **Thursday, February 27**, for a class photo. (That is “real-world” Thursday, though it will be a Wednesday schedule in St. Michael’s World!)
- The new third-trimester **electives** begin Friday, February 28.
- Eighth Grade Community Service **Team Six** will make sandwiches for Casa Maria on the evening of Friday, February 28, from roughly 5:15 - 7:00 p.m. No transportation needs to be arranged, as the food preparation is done on campus in the Smith Parish Center.

Events Beyond This Week:

- **Love of Reading Week** arrives the week of March 2-6. It kicks off in All-School Chapel with a visit from Wilma and Wilbur Wildcat, and it concludes for Upper School with a special guest speaker: **David Yetman**, author, social historian, and former host of *The Desert Speaks* and current host of *In the Americas* on PBS. He will talk to the Upper School on Friday, March 6, from 2:30 to 3:15 p.m. Also, please consider visiting the **Book Fair**, which will be held on campus that week from Tuesday through Friday.
- Eighth Grade Community Service **Team One** will spend the morning of Tuesday, March 3, at the Community Food Bank. Two driver-chaperones will likely be needed.
- Wednesday, March 18 is a **half day** with no academic classes. Students in grades 6-8 will be going off campus for the morning—6th Grade to Sabino Canyon; 7th Grade to the county’s recycling center; and 8th Grade to the Biosphere. Fifth Grade will remain on campus for the next in a series of special art sessions with Audra Scovil.

● As you have heard from Mr. Sullivan, the school will be visited by a team from the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES) during the week of Monday, March 23, as part of our re-accreditation by that organization. The visit represents the culmination of a year-long self-study on our part, a daunting but incredibly important process.

That's all for now...

Best wishes,

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Links of Note:

[Main School Website](#)
[School Facebook page](#)
[School Instagram page](#)
[St. Michael and All Angels Church](#)

[PlusPortals \(online grades\)](#)
[Eagle Express Blog](#)
[Google Classroom](#)
[McGraw-Hill ConnectEd Textbook Login](#)

[School Uniforms](#)
[Hot Lunch Ordering](#)
[Student-Parent Handbook](#)
[SMA Volunteer Page](#)

[Main School Calendar](#)
[5th Grade Test Calendar](#)
[6th Grade Test Calendar](#)
[7th Grade Test Calendar](#)
[8th Grade Test Calendar](#)