



## Harbor Country Day School

*Embracing the extraordinary in every child.*

Dear Harbor Parents,

It's time to shake hands! I can't wait to get the 2019-20 school year started with each one of you in making this year one of the best in Harbor's history.

Nine years ago, I was drawn to Harbor for the values that are reflected in its mission and in our daily practices as educators of young minds.

Empathy, compassion, teamwork, listening, fulfilling potential, experimenting, resilience, patience, industry, and self-advocacy. We work to instill these qualities in students at Harbor so that each child has the foundation necessary to reach his or her full potential.

This endeavor - our lives' work - brings me and all of the teachers at Harbor incredible joy and fulfillment, just as it has to our predecessors. Throughout these past 61 years, those of us who have been given the honor of working at Harbor have sought to establish Harbor as a beacon for excellence and safe haven that truly understands and believes in children.

Upon this fundamental bedrock of values, we have high aspirations for Harbor's future. With a strong strategic plan in place and an incredible start to our \$10 million Campaign for Harbor Country Day School, I have no doubt that we will reach those aspirations and set the stage for the next 61 years!

As we look forward to the new year, I draw your attention to a few important details. First and foremost, please familiarize yourself the Parent/Student Handbook; it is a large document but filled with important school procedures and information.



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### **Communication**

Communications between school and home is one of the goals of our strategic plan. Effective communication is critical here at Harbor, just as it is in the life of all schools. Toward that end, I remind you about the "chain of communication," if and when you have questions or concerns.

Please reach out to your child's homeroom or classroom teacher first, then contact the head of the division if you need further assistance. Do not let your concerns linger, but, when in doubt, contact us right away.

Division heads Nicole Fotis and Krystina Gallo will be reaching out to you shortly to share their thoughts and goals for the school year and regarding communication.

Every week, we publish the Tuesday *Weekly Update*, which lists all of the upcoming events in the coming week, as well as more important future dates. I urge you to take the time each week to review this communication, as it provides valuable information about the life of the school.

The school's mobile app, which we launched last January, will also post these *Weekly Updates*, as well as periodic notifications as needed. We will be using the app even more frequently this year as we strive to reach you in the most efficient and effective ways possible, so please download this app to your phones at your earliest convenience.

Lastly, the calendar on the school's website has all of the dates for the year posted, and the Harbor Backpack, also on the school's website, contains other valuable information that you will need throughout the school year.



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### **Diversity Statement**

I am happy to share the good news about the work that the Diversity Committee completed. After many months of research and conversation by this committee, the board of trustees approved its first Diversity Statement, which will appear on our website and other school materials. It reads:

*Harbor believes celebrating diversity enriches the lives of everyone, and that embracing the essence of each individual makes us stronger as a school community. We honor different perspectives, cultures, ways of life, and the beliefs people bring when they walk through our doors. As a result, our students possess the moral and ethical foundation that prepares them to live with compassion and empathy in a global world.*

### **New Faculty Members**

Attached to this letter, I am proud to share with you the names and backgrounds of the new teachers who will be joining Harbor this fall. Within the scope of introductory meetings listed on the calendar below, I know you will be meeting them soon.

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Tuesday, September 3 -- New Student Orientation**

- PK3 and PK4: 9:00-10:00 a.m.
- Kindergarten: 9:30-10:30 a.m. (all kindergartners, new and returning students, are welcome)



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- First-Eighth Grades: 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, September 4 -- PK3 through Eighth Grade -- OPENING DAY!**

**Thursday, September 5 -- Back to School Night**

- 7:00 p.m.

**Friday, September 6 -- Harbor Coffee House**

- 8:00-9:00 a.m.
- Every Friday morning throughout the year, parents are welcome to join me for coffee; no agenda, just a moment to share a warm cup of coffee and catch up with one another

**Sunday, September 8 -- All School BBQ**

- New Parents at 4:00 p.m.
- Everyone at 5:00 p.m.

At my core, I am a teacher. My goal as a teacher has always been to inspire my students as life-learners, to support them as they face obstacles, and to accept each one of them exactly as they are right now.

And as the head of the school, I continue to live by those goals. I want your child's experience at Harbor to be one that is filled with joy, growth, and understanding, and I look forward to working with you to make that happen.

I can't wait to get started!

See you soon.

John