

WOLF WATCH

— WEEKLY E-NEWS —

News for the Week of January 27

All School

Dr. Stixrud Speaks This Wednesday

Thanks to our amazing community, the Parent Education Lunch and Learn session at 11:00 a.m. this Wednesday, January 30, is now **sold out**. We are so excited to have this *New York Times* best-selling author speak at our school!

- If you are planning to attend the 6:30 p.m. session on January 30, but have yet to purchase your tickets, please [click here to buy them online](#).
- The evening session is open to all members of our surrounding community, so feel free to invite friends!
- Please contact [Paola Lehman](#) for more information on this event.
- Proceeds for the evening session will benefit re:MIND, a local nonprofit.

Gala News: You Can't A-fjord to Miss This!

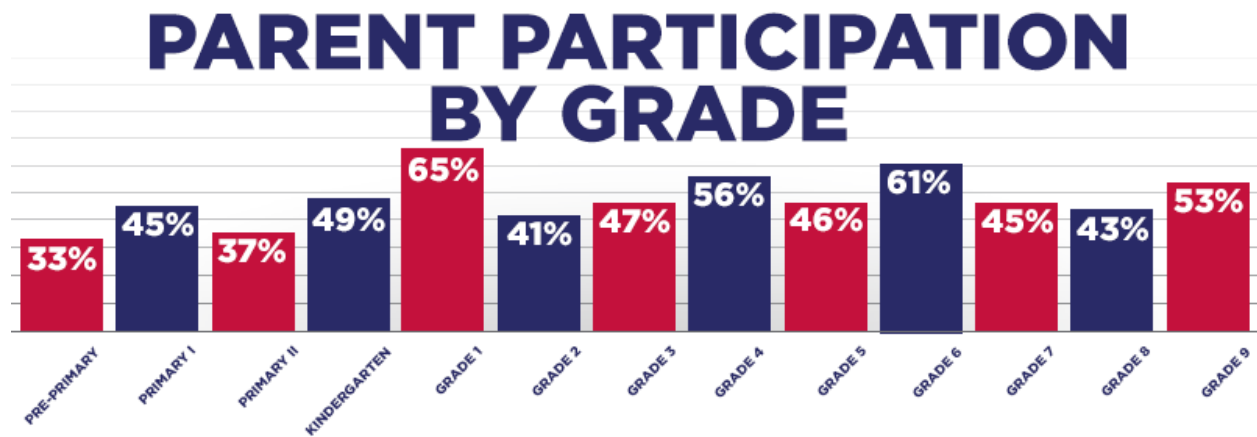
Get your Gala tickets soon—we are quickly running out of space! [Click here](#) to get your tickets now!

The online silent auction starts at noon on Wednesday, February 6. You can browse and bid for trips, sports tickets, and much more. You will be able to preview the items before the auction begins (link coming soon), but in the meantime, here are just a few of the cool options you'll have to choose from:

- A trip to the fjords in Norway
- Courtside Houston Rockets tickets
- A Big Green Egg grill and smoker
- Custom cowboy boots

Of course, class art projects and prime spots for the carpool line will be up for grabs, as well. Stay tuned for more information on the online auction!

St. Francis Fund Participation Challenge: First Grade Takes the Lead!



First Grade has stolen the lead from sixth grade! And nearly every grade saw an increase in participation over last week!

The Participation Challenge ends **Friday, March 8**. The grade with the highest participation in supporting the St. Francis Fund will be treated to a pizza party with Mr. Lovejoy on **Wednesday, March 20!**

[Please make your gift to the St. Francis Fund today!](#)

The St. Francis Fund permeates everything that we do daily at St. Francis. As is the case at other schools, our tuition only covers a portion of our operating budget. That gap is closed by the St. Francis Fund.

The St. Francis Fund helps with things like employee benefits and salaries, professional development, student academic and extracurricular activities, and even parent initiatives that are school-funded. Examples include textbooks, instructional materials, laptops, security officers, Active Shooter training for faculty and staff, and more. The St. Francis Fund makes it all happen—and, without it, programs and personnel would have to be cut due to the budget shortfall between tuition and expenses.

Every gift counts and helps bring us closer to our goal of \$800,000. Thank you!

Next Wolf Wear Sale Is This Friday

The Athletics Booster Club's next Wolf Wear Sale will be held this Friday, February 1. Visit us in the Concessions Stand near the gym on the Main Campus from 7:45 to 9:00 a.m.

Questions? E-mail [Eloise Taussig](#) or [Kara Montgomery](#).

Parents Association General Meeting Is February 5

Mark your calendar! The Parents Association General Meeting will take place on **Tuesday, February 5, at 10:00 a.m. in the Andrews House** on the South Campus. A tour of the Upper School will follow the meeting.

The General Meeting is open to all parents and is an opportunity to hear reports from PA committee chairs and to participate in a discussion of matters as they pertain to PA business.

Sports Association Registration Closes February 22

Registration closes for St. Francis Sports Association T-ball, baseball, softball, and fourth- and fifth-grade girls volleyball on Friday, February 22.

- This season, we will be hosting multiple clinics exclusively for SFSA athletes, including the following: Volleyball with Coach McMillian, Pitching (Softball) with Coach Cain, and Fielding/Hitting with Coach Cain. We will also host a coaches' clinic for each sport!
- [Register online here.](#)
- With questions, please e-mail [Ragan Cain](#).

Announcing the 2019-20 PA Board

Please join us in congratulating the newly slated 2019-20 Parents Association Executive Board. The following nominees have accepted officer roles for the coming school year:

- **President:** Carol Lee Lyons
- **President-Elect:** Leigh Williams
- **Treasurer:** Karen Rash, CPA
- **Parent Education:** Megan Tipton
- **Curriculum Support:** Kelsey Berumen
- **Communications Officer:** Lauren McCulloch
- **At-Large Officer:** Sarah Anderson

Important Information About Safeguarding God's Children

If you volunteer at St. Francis Episcopal School and will be in your child's classroom or another teaching area more than six times, the Episcopal Diocese requires certification in Safeguarding God's Children, a child protective program. Also, if you go into a classroom without your child present (such as through Art à la Carte or on People for Others Day), you are required to be certified before your first visit.

- Our next class will be taught by Father Bob Wismer on **Friday, February 8, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.** on the Main Campus.

- You must **sign up for the class** with Rose Ann Gregory [via e-mail](#) or by calling 713.458.6101 **no later than Wednesday, February 6**, to allow time to complete the initial paperwork.
- If you want to take the class in order to volunteer for the St. Francis Sports Association, the Scouts, or other St. Francis Episcopal Church activities such as Sunday School, please contact [Cindy Huteson](#).

News From Explore and Extend

Summer on the Point Registration Opens February 4

Although the weather outside reminds us it's wintertime in Houston, summer is just around the corner! Summer on the Point registration opens on **Monday, February 4, at 10:00 a.m.** Summer sessions run June 3-28 and July 8-August 2 for students 3 years old through grade 10. Yearly favorites will return, and new camps are coming for summer 2019—including baseball, photography, fashion design, speed and agility sessions, field hockey, lacrosse, coding, LEGO design, self-defense, newly redesigned math sessions for Middle and Upper School grades, and many more.

LEGO Robotics Class Returns for MS Students

Steve Johnson will be teaching his popular LEGO Robotics League class again this spring for students in grades 4-8. This class will run Mondays and Wednesdays, from February 20 through early May. Instruction will focus on building with bricks, motors, and gears, and learning and using programming skills. It's a great introduction for those who wish to be on St. Francis's Lego Robotics teams. Cost is \$300 and registration is available through "Program Registration" in My BackPack. (Please note that the registration portal will be down February 1-3, as we prepare to open registration for Summer on the Point.)

Lower School Basketball Clinics Start Next Month

During the spring, Leveil Lander will be leading Lower School basketball clinics on Mondays starting in late February. Clinics will meet February 11, 18, and 25, and March 18 and 25. Cost is \$175 and registration is available through "Program Registration" in My BackPack. (Please note that the registration portal will be down February 1-3, as we prepare to open registration for Summer on the Point.) For more information, [e-mail Coach Lander](#).

Please Share the Word! Upcoming US Admissions Tours

Our best advertising is word-of-mouth, so please tell your friends and neighbors to come learn more about St. Francis at one of our Upper School Admissions Tours, which are **held most Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m.**

Save the Date: Woolrich Luncheon Is March 5

Please mark your calendars for this year's **Woolrich Luncheon on Tuesday, March 5**, when we will be honoring our 2017-18 award recipients:

- **Alison Salinas** traveled to Germany to study the collections of the Brothers Grimm.

- **Angela Flowers** traveled behind the former Iron Curtain to study the impact and lasting effects of the Holocaust and World War II.
- **Kimberly Dunn** received training in Krav Maga mixed martial arts and self-defense.
- **Amy Chandler** and **Julia Traber** traveled to Japan to study art and theater.
- **Melanie Wallace** and **Lydia Urbanek** traveled to France to study the cultural roots of fiction and fairy tales.
- **Carlo Minotti** received training in welding and fabrication.

We hope you can join us to hear about these educators' summertime adventures—which were made possible by the Sarah W. Woolrich Fund for Faculty—and how these unique opportunities are helping to bring classroom learning to life!

Primary School

From the Assistant Division Head

Each year, we recognize Rev. Dr. King Jr.'s birthday on January 15. We honor his legacy in January thanks to former president Ronald Reagan, who signed the bill on November 3, 1983, marking the third Monday of every January as Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Here are a few related questions Primary School students have asked me that made me think and smile:

- After drawing together with Crayola markers, talking about our pictures and things we enjoy doing for a few minutes, a Primary I student asked me, “Why is your skin that way?” I smiled, then replied confidently, “God made my skin this color, just like He made your skin that color. But we are all the same on the inside.” We then began working on a collaborative picture together.
- A Pre-Primary student stopped me in the hallway, touched the top of my hand, looked up, and said very kindly with a smile, “What is this?” I smiled and told her, “That is the way God made my skin, and God made your skin that way.” She gave me a hug and a smile, and then she followed her class back to the classroom from Motor.
- I was touring a teacher applicant around the building and took him into a Primary II classroom. When we walked into the classroom, one student said confidently, “You two look the same. You have the same hair, the same ears, and the same skin color.” I affirmed her observations with a smile, saying, “Yes, that is true.” I looked at the applicant, who was also smiling at the little girl’s observation. He, too, appreciated the honesty of the child and her confidence.

At this age, children are extremely inquisitive. I appreciate this quality in our Primary School children. I believe it is my job as an adult and educator to encourage the many questions children may have and help them make sense of the world around them. I hope this *Wolf Watch* article helps you start or revisit conversations with your child about the fact that God created each one of us, and He does not make mistakes. God made each of us look different so that we may appreciate the diversity that only He can create. We may look different on the outside, but we are the same on the inside.

Warmly,

Clifton Walker, MEd
Assistant Head of Primary School

Friendly Reminder Regarding Valentine's Day Treats

The following information is located on page 30 of the *Primary School Handbook*, which is available on the Parent Portal in the "Back to School General Info" section under "Primary School Division Information":

GOODIE BAG AND TREAT POLICY

Primary School students may not give gifts, goodie bags, or treats for any occasion. Students may have food allergies, and gifts of candy and cookies could pose a serious health hazard. In addition, small toys and trinkets in goodie bags can easily become a choking risk. Therefore, goodie bags and gifts—as well as cupcakes, cookies, and other treats—are not allowed. For Valentine's Day parties, cards without candy are preferred; however, if a card has candy attached, the candy will not be consumed at school and will be sent home.

Primary School Dining Hall Menu

To view the Primary School Dining Hall menu, please click [here](#).

Mark Your Calendar

Tuesday, January 29

- *Chapel:* 9:30 a.m.
-

Wednesday, January 30

- *Chapel:* 9:30 a.m.
 - *Winter Parent Education Program:* Dr. William Stixrud, co-author of *The Self-Driven Child*, speaks at 11:00 a.m. (Lunch and Learn session) and at 6:30 p.m. in the FAC on the Main Campus
-

Thursday, January 31

- *Pre-Primary Fathers and Friends Breakfast:* 8:15 a.m. for Mrs. Ferguson's T/Th, Mrs. Meriwether's, and Mrs. Oteiza's classes
-

Friday, February 1

- *Pre-Primary Fathers and Friends Breakfast: 8:15 a.m. in Mrs. Britton's and Mrs. Ferguson's M/W/F classes*
-

Monday, February 4

- *Online Registration Opens for Summer on the Point*
-

Tuesday, February 5

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
-

Wednesday, February 6

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
-

Tuesday, February 12

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
-

Wednesday, February 13

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
-

Monday, February 18

- *Presidents' Day: School Holiday*
-

Tuesday, February 19

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*

Wednesday, February 20

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
-

Friday, February 22

- *Darla McNay Rodeo Day: Students may dress in western wear; no guns or spurs, please*
-

Saturday, February 23

- *St. Francis Gala and Auction*
-

Tuesday, February 26

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
-

Wednesday, February 27

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*

Lower School**From the Division Head**

I hope your weekend was enjoyable!

I was so honored to serve on a school accreditation team for another Episcopal School in Dallas a few weeks ago. What an incredible four-day learning experience, on so many levels!

First of all, as we at St. Francis have just started our Self-Study to ready ourselves for our accreditation visit in March of 2020, serving on this committee gave me the “inside scoop” on this incredibly thorough and important process.

Second, I spent 2-1/2 days in classrooms observing amazing teachers and unearthing every process from curriculum mapping to carpool. It is incredibly interesting to learn how different

schools tackle a variety of issues and procedures. It was also affirming to reflect on our practices and see that we are leading in “Challenging What’s Possible!”

Last, after school ended, the committee met until late in the evening sharing observations and writing reports for the school. I grew so much from this process, as I was with 11 other amazing educators from all over the Southwest. Each of us had a particular area of expertise and area of focus on the committee, but learning from them regarding these areas of expertise was one of the most valuable professional development activities in which I have ever participated.

The particular school we visited also utilizes the Responsive Classroom approach, and they were particularly successful in promoting and teaching self-regulation to their students, who were 4 years old through eighth graders. So, I decided I would use this as a springboard for this week’s article—this is truly the most critical school skill we can teach our children.

What is “self-regulation”? It is executive function (control in the brain), emotion regulation (control of feelings), and behavior regulation (control of actions and movement).

Many students do not have the tools they need to focus and pay attention, keep their emotions in check, adjust to change, or handle the frustration that is sometimes a part of interacting with others or learning something new. Children are wired to be self-centered. As they grow and mature, they develop the ability to look outside themselves and notice others. Of course, the level at which children can self-regulate in these various areas, and the rate at which children develop, is just as diverse as their personalities.

To succeed in school, students need to be able to focus, control their emotions, and adjust to change. We, as teachers, know that to make learning accessible, we must work on developing these self-regulation skills. Self-regulation is partly genetic—some children will naturally be better regulated than others; however, self-regulation is VERY teachable.

In the school setting, we focus on the following:

- Providing tools and structure for developmentally appropriate learning
- Scaffolding instruction based on Zones of Proximal Development (making it “just right”)
- Discussing and reflecting
- Modeling and praising appropriate behavior

Again, as in everything we do, you can partner with us to help promote self-regulation at home. I found a wonderful [article](#) fully explaining many different strategies to promote this in your family. The following are a few suggestions from the article:

- Help your child recognize the higher goal.
- Use naturally occurring situations to teach strategies for self-regulation.
- Acknowledge the challenge of regulation.
- Have your child make a choice and a plan/empower your child.
- Play control games.
- Remember that these skills develop over a lifetime.
- **REALIZE IT IS JUST AS IMPORTANT TO LET GO OF CONTROL**

I used all caps on the last bullet point, as it is the most important one and is the focus of our book study of *The Self-Driven Child* and of the related author visit this Wednesday. It’s not too

late to start reading! It is truly one of the most powerful parenting books I have read, and I wish I had read it when my boys were young!

Quote of the Week: *“The human goal is to be as undercontrolled as possible and as overcontrolled as necessary.”* —Block and Kremen (1996)

Thank you for taking time to read this and for wanting to be a part of our learning community!

Have a blessed week,

Carol Christ, MEd
Head of Lower School

Doodle for Google Art Contest: Calling All LS Students

Calling all students who are interested in participating in the [Doodle for Google Art Contest!](#) This year’s theme is “When I grow up, I hope . . .” and we can’t wait to see the fantastic wishes or practical plans our Lower School students come up with. Anything you dream up is fair game, whether it’s sky cities, teleporters, cleaner water, pizza trees, time machines, edible clouds, or Earth-cooling fans.

Artists, here’s what to do:

1. Complete the [entry form](#) or pick one up at school from Mrs. Chandler or Mrs. Tennant. (School-year groups are K-3 and 4-5.)
2. Create your Doodle using any materials you want.
3. Write an artist statement that describes the drawing and how it represents something that inspires you. Be sure to also fill out the rest of the required information and sign the entry form.
4. **Submit your Doodle to either Mrs. Chandler or Mrs. Tennant by Monday, March 4.**

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, January 28

- *Birthday Chapel:* Students with a birthday between January 27-February 2 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today

Wednesday, January 30

- *Chapel:* 8:05 a.m.
- *Winter Parent Education Program:* Dr. William Stixrud, co-author of *The Self-Driven Child*, speaks at 11:00 a.m. (Lunch and Learn session) and at 6:30 p.m. in the FAC on the Main Campus

Monday, February 4

- *Birthday Chapel:* Students with a birthday between February 3-9 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today
- *Online Registration Opens for Summer on the Point*

Wednesday, February 6

- *Chapel:* 8:05 a.m.
- *Primary II Parent Tour of Lower School:* 8:30 a.m. in the HBR

Thursday, February 7

- *Online Gala Auction Begins:* Through February 14

Monday, February 11

- *Birthday Chapel:* Students with a birthday between February 10-16 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today

Wednesday, February 13

- *FAC Chapel:* 8:05 a.m.

Thursday, February 14

- *Valentine's Day Parties*

Monday, February 18

- *Presidents' Day:* School holiday
-

Wednesday, February 20

- *Birthday Chapel:* Students with a birthday between February 17-23 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today

Middle School

From the Division Head

Happy Sunday, Middle School families! I hope this finds you well!

Last week, the MS surpassed our January goal of 600 acts of kindness for the Unselfie Challenge. As I write this, we have currently reported 977 AOKs in a little over two weeks. That's wonderful, but I know we can crush that number, as well. This past week during Wednesday's Chapel service, I challenged the MS to try to reach the thousands, so we'll see what number we land on by the end of the month.

Speaking of AOKs, a student group within National Junior Honor Society has asked me to write on their behalf. They are taking on the initiative of helping homeless shelters within the Houston area, and they wanted me to post information about local shelters that could use volunteers: [Lord of the Streets](#), [Star of Hope](#), and [Angela House](#). Thanks to Sophie, Natalie, Taylor, Taylor, and Kate (yes, two Taylors).

This week, we host [Dr. William Stixrud](#), co-author of *The Self-Driven Child*. We look forward to learning more about our students and how we can better teach and parent them in their formative years of development. Thanks to the Parents Association for coordinating this meaningful event.

As a reminder, please adhere to drop-off protocol in the mornings and afternoons. We've observed some students getting dropped off in other locations, and we want to make sure that everyone is safe and accounted for. Thanks for your help with this.

I wish you all a wonderful week! It's a beautiful day, and we are Wolves!

Sincerely,

Connor Cook, EdD
Head of Middle School

Doodle for Google Art Contest: Calling All MS Students

Calling all students who are interested in participating in the [Doodle for Google Art Contest!](#) This year's theme is "When I grow up, I hope . . ." and we can't wait to see the fantastic wishes or practical plans our Middle School students come up with. Anything you dream up is fair

game, whether it's sky cities, teleporters, cleaner water, pizza trees, time machines, edible clouds, or Earth-cooling fans.

Artists, here's what to do:

1. Complete the [entry form](#) or pick one up at school from Mrs. Chandler or Mrs. Tennant. (School-year groups are 4-5, 6-7, and 8-9.)
2. Create your Doodle using any materials you want.
3. Write an artist statement that describes the drawing and how it represents something that inspires you. Be sure to also fill out the rest of the required information and sign the entry form.
4. **Submit your Doodle to either Mrs. Chandler or Mrs. Tennant by Monday, March 4.**

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, January 28

- *Monday Schedule/Dress Uniform*
 - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
 - *Speaker for Seventh Graders Attending the Summer Costa Rica Trip: 1:10-1:40 p.m. in the HBR*
-

Tuesday, January 29

- *Tuesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Eighth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway*
 - *Advisory: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
 - *Howlers Practice (Grade 8 Only): 10:45-11:15 a.m. in the Wheatcroft Parish Hall*
-

Wednesday, January 30

- *Wednesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Seventh Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway*
 - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
 - *Howlers Practice (Grade 8 Only): 11:20-11:55 a.m. in the Dance Room*
 - *Winter Parent Education Program: Dr. William Stixrud, co-author of *The Self-Driven Child*, speaks at 11:00 a.m. (Lunch and Learn session) and at 6:30 p.m. in the FAC on the Main Campus*
 - *Fifth-Grade Colonial Day Parent Meeting: 12:50-1:40 p.m. in the HBR*
-

Thursday, January 31

- *Thursday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Fifth and Sixth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m.* in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway
 - *MS Class Meeting: 9:15-10:00 a.m.* in the FAC
 - *Winter Pep Rally: 2:35-3:05 p.m.* in the gym
-

Friday, February 1

- *Friday Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
 - *NJHS Meeting: 7:15-7:50 a.m.* in Dr. Bedard's classroom
 - *Wolf Wear Sale: 7:45-9:00 a.m.* in the concessions area near the gym
 - *Advisory: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
 - *Faculty vs. Eighth-Grade Boys Basketball Team: 2:40-3:30 p.m.* in the gym
-

Saturday, February 2

- *Spring Musical Rehearsal: 1:00-5:00 p.m* in the FAC
-

Monday, February 4

- *Monday Schedule/Dress Uniform*
 - *MS Super Bowl Construction Ingathering: Through February 8; in the FAC*
 - *NJHS Read Aloud (Various): Through February 8*
 - *Online Registration Opens for Summer on the Point*
 - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
 - *End of Winter Athletics Season Honor the Wolves: 3:00-5:00 p.m.* in the FAC, gym, and classrooms
-

Tuesday, February 5

- *Tuesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Eighth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m.* in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway
 - *Eighth-Grade Field Trip to Holocaust Museum: 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.*
 - *Spring Athletics Season Begins: 3:00-5:00 p.m.* in the gym and on the fields
-

Wednesday, February 6

- *Wednesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Seventh Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m.* in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway
 - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
-

Thursday, February 7

- *Thursday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Online Gala Auction Begins: Through February 14*
 - *Bible Study for Fifth and Sixth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m.* in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway
 - *Seventh-Grade Field Trip to See Newsies: 8:30-11:30 a.m.* at Stratford High School
 - *MS Councils Meeting: 9:15-10:00 a.m.* in classrooms
 - *Seventh-Grade WEB Applications Due: Turn in to Mr. Duran by 3:00 p.m.*
-

Friday, February 8

- *Friday Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
 - *Special Schedule for Grade 8*
 - *NJHS Meeting: 7:15-7:50 a.m.* in Dr. Bedard's classroom
 - *Eighth-Grade Field Trip to Top Golf: 12:15-2:30 p.m.*
 - *Fifth-Grade Game Night: 5:00-7:30 p.m.* in the FAC
 - *MS Winter Dance for Grades 6-8: 7:30-10:00 p.m.* in the gym; theme is "Winter Wonderland: Dance Under the Lights"; students only
-

Sunday, February 10

- *Spring Musical (Sunday Rehearsal): 1:00-5:00 p.m.* in the FAC
-

Monday, February 11

- *Monday Schedule/Dress Uniform*
 - *Re-enrollment Contracts Due*
 - *NJHS Read Aloud (Various): Through February 15*
 - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
-

Tuesday, February 12

- *Tuesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Eighth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m.* in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway
 - *Advisory: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
-

Wednesday, February 13

- *Wednesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Seventh Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m.* in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway
 - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
-

Thursday, February 14

- *Thursday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Fifth and Sixth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m.* in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway
 - *Class Meeting: 9:15-10:00 a.m.* in the FAC
-

Friday, February 15

- *Friday Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
- *Advisory: 10:45-11:25 a.m.*

Upper School

From the Division Head

We are excited to welcome members of The Fontaine Center at The University of Georgia to our campus **tomorrow and Tuesday, January 28 and 29**, to meet with Upper and Middle School students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, and board members about a pilot prevention program at St. Francis. The Fontaine Center provides comprehensive alcohol and drug prevention programming for middle and high school students. With a successful track record at The University of Georgia, they would like to expand their reach and help students make better decisions ahead of the transition into college settings. We have a unique opportunity to be the only school in Texas piloting this program.

Fontaine Center members would like to visit with available ninth-grade parents from **12:45 to 1:45 p.m. on Tuesday, January 29, at the South Campus**. Please let Cathleen in the Upper School Office know if you plan to attend.

As I conclude my excerpts from *The Self-Driven Child: The Science and Sense of Giving Your Kids More Control Over Their Lives*, I'd like to remind you that Dr. William Stixrud will be the featured speaker at the Parents Association's upcoming Winter Parent Education Program. While the luncheon engagement is sold out, there are still tickets available for the 6:30 p.m. lecture this coming Wednesday, January 30, in the Fine Arts Center on the Main Campus. This evening session is open to the public, and you can [buy tickets to the lecture here](#).

As promised, this week's message includes some excerpts from the final three chapters of *The Self-Driven Child*. These are the excerpts that resonated with me as both an educator and a parent.

Chapter 12 ("The SAT, ACT, and Other Four-Letter Words")

Testing Stinks . . . Usually

- "Not everything that can be measured matters, and not everything that matters can be measured." Our obsession with metrics has led to the testing industrial complex—a multibillion-dollar business that's only getting bigger.
- Sometimes standardized tests provide the first sign of an issue.
- Tests become problematic when they are seen as Binet feared they would be—as markers of intelligence.
- Standardized testing mostly stinks, but it is a necessary hurdle if you want to go to college.

The N.U.T.S. and Bolts of Testing

- Reminder of Dr. Sonia Lupien's N.U.T.S.—**N**ovelty, **U**npredictability, **T**hreat to the ego, **S**ense of control (or lack thereof)
 - **Novelty:** You want to know what you're likely to see on the test and how you'll handle it. You want to practice the details until they're rote, so that actually taking the test is no big deal.
 - **Unpredictability:** By focusing on process, you will minimize unpredictability. Simply believing there's more than one way will reduce your stress and help you think more clearly. In addition to Plan B thinking, we suggest that you do some disaster-preparedness planning. It's pretty much like mental contrasting.
 - **Threat to the Ego:** It's worth saying again: test scores are not an accurate reflection of intelligence. Stressed brains simply won't work well. We encourage anyone who has experienced a threat to self around a test to spend some time writing about bigger-picture questions. This will shift your thinking and improve your sense of control. Answer questions like, "What are my core values? What do I really care about? Who am I, regardless of how I do on the test?" (Answers might include, "Lacrosse player, sister, activist, friend," etc.) This exercise helps give you perspective and recognize that you are more than a test score. It's perfectly normal to get nervous before a test, but you can work to sidestep this stress by choosing your attitude about the test. Look to conquer, rather than to survive.

- **Sense of Control (or the Lack Thereof):** In short, if you focus on process instead of outcome, whether taking a test or jumping out of an airplane, you will have a much greater sense of control.

Chapter 13 (“Who’s Ready for College?”)

A Brain-Toxic Environment

College affects many smart kids in similar ways. This is because college is often a brain-toxic environment. Let’s consider for a moment the daily stressors that most college students experience:

- **An Average Bedtime of 2:00 to 3:00 a.m.:** Students who do not sleep enough pay for it with poorer academic performance and increased risk for a wide range of emotional problems.
- **Hours of Unstructured Time**
- **A Culture Where Binge-Drinking Is the Norm:** A recent Harvard University study found that 44 percent of students at four-year colleges drink at the binge level or higher (a minimum of five drinks in a row for boys and four for girls). The drinking habits of teens have changed dramatically over the last few decades. Whereas they once used to drink to have fun, they now drink to obliterate themselves. This is not surprising, given that stress plays an important role in the chemical use of young people.
- **Food-Related Issues:** Eating disorders are often the manifestation of a rigid and unhealthy attempt to create an illusion of control when healthy opportunities are lacking.
- **Stimulant Abuse:** College freshmen now report the highest stress and lowest mental health levels in 25 years. Although depression and anxiety are still the most common referral problems for college counseling centers, growing numbers of students report stress-related eating disorders, substance abuse, and self-injury.

College is Not an Entitlement

- We need to overhaul the way we think about college.
- Parents should consider sending their kids to college just as they would consider a business investment—because it is a huge investment.
- Almost 50 percent of the students who enroll in four-year colleges don’t graduate. And when they don’t, it’s painful to the kids and costly to their parents.

Do They Go or Do They Gap? (How to Tell if They’re Ready)

- Some questions to ask when determining your child’s college readiness include:
 - Does your child accept responsibility for his own life?
 - Does your child have adequate self-understanding?
 - Does your child have enough self-regulation to run his life?
 - Does your child have adequate self-motivation for school?
 - Can your child manage day-to-day living independently?
 - Does your child have healthy ways to manage or relieve stress?
 - Is your child burned out?
 - Does your child have the academic skills to do college-level work?
 - If your student needs academic support, will he ask for it and use it?

- Does your child have the social competence to manage a complex social environment?
- What do you do if your child isn't ready?
 - The sheer force of your will won't make your child ready if he isn't ready. He has to get there by himself.
 - Jason Sarouhan, vice president of the Center for Interim Programs, says there are five categories of students who benefit from taking a gap year. Most kids who aren't ready for college fall into one of these five categories, and most would benefit from taking a break:
 1. **The worker**, with high test scores and a high grade point average;
 2. **The-meaning seeker**, generally with high test scores and a lower GPA;
 3. **The floater**, who isn't fully engaged with life and may be on the immature side;
 4. **The struggler**, whose high school experience has been clouded by learning differences; and
 5. **The pragmatist**, who wants to attend college with a clearer focus.

Chapter 14 ("Alternate Routes")

A Realistic View of the Adult World

- One of the major challenges keeping young people from developing a healthy sense of control is their narrow and distorted views of the adult world and what it takes to be successful and have a satisfying life.
- The reality is that we become successful in this world by working hard at something that comes easily to us and that engages us. We need to tell our kids that the skill set required to be a successful student is, in many ways, very different from the skill set that will lead you to have a successful career and a good life.

Breaking the Mass Psychosis

We have found that simply telling kids the truth about the world—including the advantages of being a good student—increases their flexibility and drive. It motivates unmotivated kids to shift the emphasis from, "Here are the hoops I will have to jump through to be successful" to, "Here are some of the many ways I can choose to develop myself in order to make an important contribution to this world."

On Money, Career, and Happiness

- We do think it helps kids to know that, although income and self-reported happiness are highly correlated, the correlation is much stronger at very low levels of income than at high levels—and that after a fairly low level of financial comfort, there is no correlation between increased income and greater happiness. It's not that we want to discourage kids from making money. It's just that we want kids to make thoughtful decisions about their lives based on what's important to them.
- In the end, the best way you can help your child maintain a sense of control and guide him (as a non-anxious consultant) into a satisfying life is to teach him to ask himself two questions: "What do I truly love to do?" And, "What can I do better than most people?" It can be that simple.

Onward

- It takes courage to trust a child to make decisions, to trust in a child's brain development, and to ignore the pressures that cause us to protect our kids from themselves or to be overly involved in their lives. It takes courage to face our fears about the future. It also takes humility to accept that we don't often know what's in our kids' best interest. It takes a change in mindset to focus on ourselves—our own emotions and attitudes—as an extremely important element of our child-rearing.
- As has often been said, people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel. Think of how you want to make your child feel: loved, supported, and capable. And above all else, let that be your guide.

Sincerely,

Cara Henderson
Head of Upper School

Doodle for Google Art Contest

Calling all students who are interested in participating in the [Doodle for Google Art Contest!](#) This year's theme is "When I grow up, I hope . . ." and we can't wait to see the fantastic wishes or practical plans our ninth-grade students come up with. Anything you dream up is fair game, whether it's sky cities, teleporters, cleaner water, pizza trees, time machines, edible clouds, or Earth-cooling fans.

Artists, here's what to do:

1. Complete the [entry form](#).
2. Create your Doodle using any materials you want.
3. Write an artist statement that describes the drawing and how it represents something that inspires you. Be sure to also fill out the rest of the required information and sign the entry form.
4. **Submit your Doodle to either Mrs. Chandler or Mrs. Tennant by Monday, March 4.**

Please Share the Word! Upcoming US Admissions Tours

Our best advertising is word-of-mouth, so please tell your friends and neighbors to come learn more about St. Francis at one of our Upper School Admissions Tours, which are held most Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, January 28

- *Special Schedule/Regular Uniform*
- *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*

Tuesday, January 29

- *Day 4 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Chapel: 9:50 a.m. in the Andrews House*
 - *The Fontaine Center Parent Meeting: 12:45-1:45 p.m.; campus location TBD*
 - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
-

Wednesday, January 30

- *Day 6 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
 - *Boys Basketball Practice: 5:30 p.m. in Crum Gym*
 - *Winter Parent Education Program: Dr. William Stixrud, co-author of *The Self-Driven Child*, speaks at 11:00 a.m. (Lunch and Learn session) and at 6:30 p.m. in the FAC on the Main Campus*
-

Thursday, January 31

- *Day 6 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Chapel: 9:50 a.m. in the Andrews House*
 - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
-

Friday, February 1

- *Day 1 Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
 - *Girls Basketball Game: 4:30 p.m. at St. Agnes Academy*
 - *Boys Basketball Game: 5:00 p.m. at Frassati Catholic High School*
-

Monday, February 4

- *Day 2 Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
 - *Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
-

Tuesday, February 5

- *Day 3 Schedule/Regular Uniform*

- *Chapel:* 9:50 a.m. in the Andrews House
 - *Girls Basketball Game:* 6:00 p.m. in Crum Gym
-

Wednesday, February 6

- *Day 4 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
-

Thursday, February 7

- *Day 5 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Chapel:* 9:50 a.m. in the Andrews House
-

Friday, February 8

- *Day 6 Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*

Church

Sports Association Registration Closes February 22

Registration closes for St. Francis Sports Association T-ball, baseball, softball, and fourth- and fifth-grade girls volleyball on Friday, February 22.

- This season, we will be hosting multiple clinics exclusively for SFSA athletes, including the following: Volleyball with Coach McMillian, Pitching (Softball) with Coach Cain, and Fielding/Hitting with Coach Cain. We will also host a coaches' clinic for each sport!
- [Register online here.](#)
- With questions or concerns, please e-mail [Ragan Cain](#).

Outreach Sunday Is February 3

St. Francis is a generous community, and we love to show it in a big way on Outreach Sundays! Held each fall and spring, these parish-wide outreach events offer activities for all ages so that everyone can participate in serving others. This spring, Outreach Sunday will be held on **February 3 at 10:00 a.m. in the Wheatcroft Parish Hall**. Join your parish family for a fun time of service together as we make sandwiches, snack packs, and more to share with those in need in our city.

Join Us for New Member Orientation on March 3

If you started attending St. Francis Episcopal Church within the last two years and have not made your membership official yet, we invite you to become a member of our family by attending our New Member Orientation class on **Sunday, March 3, from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Hogan Board Room.** (Lunch will be served.) Join Father Bates to learn about our church, our mission, and how membership in Christ's Body at St. Francis can help you deepen your relationship with God.

Please RSVP to Amy Homer via [e-mail](#) or at 832.325.2983.

Discovering Christian Meditation

An opportunity for silent prayer at the church is available:

- Tuesdays, 4:00-4:30 p.m.
- Thursdays, 7:30-8:00 a.m.

These sessions are in the St. Clare Chapel and are led by Father David Price.

We find the roots of Christian meditation in the practice of Jesus recorded in the Gospels and in the content of the Epistles. We see it developed further in the writings of the desert tradition of the early church. Come learn a bit about it, gain a few hints about the practice and, mostly, come and pray.