

August 26, 2015

Dear Form VI Students,

Well, that was a startlingly quick summer break.

I hope you are enjoying the last few weeks of summer vacation and starting to think about your senior year at Browning. I also hope that you have spent some time this summer preparing for the college process, perhaps even visiting some colleges or getting a draft of your Common Application essay under your belt. The year ahead promises to be exciting and, at times, anxiety producing, but with some careful planning and requisite hard work, it should also be the most productive and engaging year you have ever had at Browning.

Summer is a busy time at Browning. Construction has been non-stop. The renovation of the 52 East 62nd St. building is wrapping up and you will be amazed at the transformation. Mr. Marshall and the Browning maintenance staff have done a terrific job preparing the school for your return.

Please review the *Student Handbook* (online) before school starts. Additionally, I hope that at this point you have finished your summer reading for your classes. I am hoping to have all of the seniors help to facilitate group discussions on *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson shortly after school begins, so make sure you feel confident and prepared to discuss the book. Browning will have the privilege of having Mr. Stevenson visit and speak at an assemble on Friday, October 30.

The first day of school will mark a significant change in your lives at Browning: You will be the leaders of the student body. Your leadership not only includes guiding clubs, being team captains, Key Society members or Peer Leaders, but also extends to every facet of school life. The students in Forms III-V will aspire to be like you. Think back to when you were a Form III student: I am sure you can still remember what the Form VI students said and did. I will rely on you to realize your leadership status by being positive and inspiring role models for the other students, including those in the Middle and Lower Schools.

As we have done for the past couple of years, in December you will join your parents on Conference Day and attend this meeting which will give you the opportunity to talk with your parents and your advisor about the progress of the first half of the year and your goals for the second half.

We will continue our semester schedule. There will be final exams in December and June.

To kick off your senior year, the entire class, Mr. Pelz and I will make a day trip to the Mountain Lakes Camp in North Salem, NY on Friday, September 11. As in previous years, The Mountain

Workshop will run the retreat. Please arrive at Browning by 7:45 a.m. on the 11th. We will travel by bus to North Salem, where we will do high- and low-ropes courses and other team-building activities. The Mountain Workshop will provide certified instructors to guide us through the courses. The school will provide lunches, but you should bring a water bottle. We should be back at Browning no later than 5 p.m. Please send in the Browning permission slip as well as the release form from Mountain Workshop by Tuesday, September 8. Participation in the trip is mandatory, but you will not be able to participate in the retreat if we do not have the completed forms. Traditionally, this trip is a lot of fun, and it provides an important opportunity to reacquaint yourself with your classmates and to set in motion the start of a successful senior year.

As you ponder the coming school year, think about what you want to have accomplished by next June when you are walking down the aisle of Christ Church during commencement. This is the year when you truly begin to take control of the course on which you will travel after Browning. I know you are ready for that responsibility, but the most important thing is that you believe you are prepared to take the reins. The college process is only one aspect of your final year at Browning. You should continue to challenge yourself intellectually and grow individually as members of this vibrant and supportive community. Demand more of yourself this year than any other at Browning. Think about graduation next June when Mr. Clement will speak about each one of you. What is it that you will want him to say about you? At the end of the year, when we celebrate all of you and your accomplishments, make sure that you can confidently say you have done your best.

At the same time, realize that the success of your senior year is tied to the success of the class. It is easy to become too competitive in the college admissions process. Your support of your classmates and their support of you has a significant impact on your senior year and the life of the Upper School. I am confident you are all going to be successful in your pursuit of the colleges. You have worked very hard to reach this point in your Browning careers. I am excited to work with you in any way I can this year to help you achieve your goals, both academic and extracurricular.

Enjoy the final weeks of summer. I want to thank, in advance, the Peer Leaders who will be working with Form III during the Orientation on Wednesday, September 9. Your help is greatly appreciated. And I look forward seeing to the entire Class of 2016 at 8:15 a.m. on Thursday, September 10.

Sincerely,
James E. Reynolds
Head of the Upper School