



May 23, 2012

Dear Families,

Just four years ago this week, we sent off our first graduating class of 10 students in what was an emotional milestone for our school. They were the first – the pioneers who led the way when there was no historical precedent, no track record and no school tradition upon which to base their faith in DDS to deliver on their futures. But deliver we did.

This Friday we will be celebrating our fourth graduation with a class totaling 22 seniors, soon to be alumni of our school. It is amazing to me that in this short time period, our graduations and senior celebrations are already a “tradition” – routine because of our past successes, yet still special because they reflect the uniqueness of each class and what those students bring to building a strong school legacy.

If you just look at the numbers, 100% of our graduating seniors will be attending the college of their choice. They were accepted to 47 colleges and universities across 14 different states – schools like **West Point, Chapel Hill, American University, and Tufts**. Approximately 25% of them will be attending the most selective schools in our nation – a statistic that compares favorably among any of our independent school peers. More than 70% of this class earned scholarships, including the Cambridge Scholarship at **Rhodes**, and a Bonner Scholarship at **Mars Hill**.

Go beyond the numbers and our story takes on even more meaning as it focuses on how we have helped make dreams come true for these young men and women. 30% of this class is heading to a college where they will continue their athletic pursuits, four at the Division I level. Others are pursuing their artistic passions while still others are headed to pursue their career aspirations in medicine, engineering, and business.

This group is joining our small but growing list of 45 alumni who came before them and were accepted to schools including: **Davidson, Washington and Lee, NYU, Virginia Tech, Savannah College of Arts and Design, Clemson, and Babson** to name a few.

As we add this year’s graduates to our legacy, we continue to develop our future. In fact, next year’s rising juniors and seniors are already being pursued by some outstanding colleges like: **Harvard, Columbia, Duke, Wake Forest, and Notre Dame**.

But if our story about the success of our graduates stops here, we have not succeeded in our mission and our promise to these young men and women. Because in truth, there is nothing more important than for us to have influenced and changed each child for the better; that is the real measure of our success. How did we enlighten, engage and inspire them? Did we instill in them a passion for lifelong learning and the facility for critical and creative problem solving? Are they prepared to be good citizens? Did we open their minds and hearts and provide them with the knowledge and tools to make a difference in the world in which they will lead?

Deep down, we know that these greater aspirations are what students care most about and as parents, what we really want for our children. But too often this meaningful conversation gets overshadowed by a discussion of SAT scores and college acceptances, because those things are much easier to measure and compare.

Last week, I was standing along the sidelines at a sporting event held at another independent school. One of the parents from that school was asking me about Davidson Day. The conversation invariably ended up on our graduates and where they were attending college. The dad nodded with approval when I told him.

Then he winked and said, "We don't spend \$150,000 over a ten year period on our kids' education unless it's a ticket into a better college..." I smiled and nodded back. But in my heart I know it's so much more than that. It's about making each child their individual best so they can ultimately fulfill their dreams, make a difference, and enjoy a happy and successful life, wherever their journey leads them.

That's what you can count on our school to provide your child – preparation for a rewarding and meaningful life. That's why we teach young men and women to think for themselves and act for others.

When I look at the Class of 2012, I know we have achieved our purpose. I am so very proud to be sending them onward in their life-long quest to reach their highest potential in every possible respect. I am thankful for what they have given our school. And I am honored to very soon be calling them alums of Davidson Day School.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bonnie Cotter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "C".

Bonnie Cotter  
Head of School