



Dear Upper School Parents,

August 2022

Hello and welcome to the 2022-23 school year! I hope that your families have spent time outside in the mountains, on the trails, at the ocean, and with friends and family members far from computer screens this summer. I rested and relaxed with my friends and family in Montana and Maine. I am energized to begin my fourth year leading the Upper School.

I was happily drawn out of my July vacation bliss to review the SGS Class of 2022 IB Diploma Program (DP) results. This year we returned to the “norm” of combined internal and external assessment data to determine IB DP scores. Our students earned many 5s, 6s, and 7s. They earned many As and Bs in TOK and Extended Essay. Our teachers predicted scores for students more accurately than in years past. Lastly, our graduates have earned hundreds of credits towards college courses from their IB DP scores, which gives them freedom to advance to higher level classes as incoming first-year students and saves parents tuition dollars. Elizabeth Tender (IB Coordinator) and I will host an IB DP Results Q&A in September to talk through these scores. Please consider joining us.

I read a blog post this summer about the life and leadership lessons that we can learn from geese. I am applying some of those lessons to the work that I do supporting students. My primary goal this year is to continue building a **collaborative community of learners** in the Upper School.

- **Collaborative:** Like geese flying together in their V formation, a collaborative school community is comprised of teachers, leaders, parents, and students who work together to create synergy and lift for each other. Flying in formation adds more capacity than if the geese flew on their own because the flapping of each wing creates uplift. At SGS, we all benefit from the momentum of the group.
- **Community:** Geese take turns leading the V formation when they fly because no single bird can lead alone. At SGS, each child is supported by teachers, friends, advisors, club mentors, staff members, coaches, and students in different grades. The source of our student success is the momentum of every community member.
- **Learners:** Geese chart new paths on their migratory routes, depending on the weather and wind conditions. It is not just students at SGS who are learning. Upper School teachers stretch themselves to try new assessments, pilot new learning strategies, and meet evolving student needs.

In addition to continuing to learn together, I hope that we will grow together. Leading the SGS Upper School community during the Covid years has taught me that being ready to learn requires more than just academic readiness.

1. We need to support each other’s mental health.
 - a. I will work with both Meghan Kilgore and our new K12 Counselor Kelsey Nylund to develop social and emotional programming that supports student needs.
2. We need to challenge each other to be our best, holding each other to high expectations.

- a. In a separate email I will highlight some new parameters in our **Upper School Student Handbook** around attendance, arriving at class on time, turning in work on time, and a few other structures to support student success.

Our SGS theme for the year is CONNECT. After the many challenges of Covid, coming together is even more important than ever. For me in the Upper School connect means purposefully deepening relationships that we have already, and building links and partnerships with new students, teachers, and colleagues. Read more about the theme in Jamie Tender's Back to School letter. Go, Dragons!

New Dragons:

I would like to welcome Allie McBride and Tom Voigtlaender to the Upper School teaching community.

- Allie brings myriad ideas, energy, and experience in the TAB philosophy to our Visual Art classes. Allie is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Art Therapy and joins us from Colorado with her husband, dog, and young daughter.
- Tom will teach IB DP Economics, Making of the Modern World, and TOK. Tom recently completed a Master's degree in Secondary Education at Whitworth University after a career in the armed forces. He brings an ability to engage students in critical thinking.

You will have an opportunity to meet the new teachers at the Back-to-School Night (Sept. 15).

Upper School Technology and Communication Notes

Digital communication between teachers and students & parents will be through **Edsby**, our new learning management system. Similar to how we used PowerSchool Learning, teachers will have an Edsby page for each of their courses with links for resources, class information, and homework details. Our goal is to make Edsby the one and only place for all communication about classes, assignments, and assessment. Thomas Hurst, our Director of Technology, will lead the adoption and implementation of Edsby, including trainings for parents in early September. We are really excited about the power of Edsby and look forward to full implementation.

Every week during the school year, I write an Upper School Parent letter, which will be posted on the **Upper School News and Information** Edsby page, linked on the SGS email update sent out at the beginning of each week. Please take a few minutes to read my letter for important information and upcoming dates.

I welcome in-person conversations. As with the last three years, I invite parents of 9th graders, parents of new students, and any other parent to set up a **Listening Conference** with me. My 45-minute listening conferences are opportunities for me to listen and learn about your family, your child, and your hopes for the SGS experience.

During the school year, please reach out via email or phone to speak with me about any questions, concerns, or comments you may have. I am here to support you and your children during their four-year journey through the Upper School. I also have a lovely coffee machine in my office and welcome coffee talk with parents.

Important documents:

Please review this year's **Upper School Student Handbook** with your child. I refer to this document frequently to help me to apply our expectations fairly to our student community. It is helpful for parents to understand our Core Values and guiding expectations as well.

- I have added more specific details in the **Upper School Student Handbook** about attendance, assessment policies, and communication. My first newsletter in August will highlight specific pages in the Handbook that have been edited and updated.

We provide as many forms as possible in PowerSchool (<https://ps.sgs.org/public/>). Please sign in with your parent password to access the forms and complete them as soon as possible.

- Please refer to the Electronic Form and Permission Slip Instructions and form checklist for a complete list of required forms. These are **due on August 19th**.
- Student schedules are now available to view on PowerSchool.
 - Please email me if you have questions or would like to discuss possible changes.

Important dates:

- ✓ **August 26:** Upper School New Student Orientation (12:30pm - 2:30pm)
- ✓ **August 29:** First day of school: Grades 9-12, starting at 8:20am
- ✓ **August 30-September 1:** Back to School Trips (Grades 9-12)
- ✓ **September 2:** Dragon Dance on the Davenport Lawn, starting at 2:15pm.
 - *Parents are invited* to attend this K-12 SGS school kick-off tradition.
- ✓ **September 15:** Back to School Night for MS & US, 6:00pm
- ✓ **October 12:** PSAT day with special morning and afternoon schedules
- ✓ **October 14:** Teacher In-Service Day, no classes K-12
- ✓ **November 4:** Student + Parent + Advisor conferences

Please review the online 2022-23 Calendar for additional events.

Operational details:

- We will continue to offer the optional lunch program this year. You will receive an email from Michelle Bledsoe detailing the lunch choices and ordering procedures in late August.
- Sports information and updates will be sent out by Ryan Peplinski, Athletic Director.
- Bus information and updates will be sent out by John Young, Bus Coordinator.
- Dismissal will be at 3:15pm this year (five minutes later than 21-22 school year). The buses will roll at 3:25 from the Lower School.

I look forward to learning with your family this year. I aim to support your child to have the best academic experience possible while also meeting their social and emotional needs. Go TEAM Dragon!

Sincerely,



Francesca Mulazzi, Ed.D.
Head of Upper School