

Dear Murdoch Families,

I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on the progress of our high school planning. As you know, we plan to open our doors for ninth graders beginning in the fall of 2007 and it is my intention to keep families as informed as possible as we go through the planning process. Please check back at this link for updates regarding the high school. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me by phone 978-970-0100 or by email wlandberg@murdochschoo.org. I have already received some great emails with very good questions – please keep them coming.

Thanks,
Walter Landberg, Director

Staffing: Mr. Greg Orpen and Ms. Sasha Douglas have committed to working with me on the planning of the high school this year and as teachers during the first year of the high school. Greg is in his seventh year at the school and will teach science and math at the high school in the first year. Sasha Douglas is in her sixth year at our school and will teach humanities and social studies. In addition to their current teaching responsibilities, Greg and Sasha will be working this year to plan the curriculum for the first and second year of the high school. We will work to hire additional teaching staff in the spring. Scott Glidden, our development director, is also working closely with me to plan the high school building.

Facility: For the short term, we've begun seeking temporary space for the first year of the high school. Ideally, this space will be close in proximity to the middle school to assist parents who have students in both schools and need to drop off. The space will be in Chelmsford, per the requirements of our charter. The long term plan is to have a brand new building and a larger campus to accommodate extra curricular activities, etc.

Curriculum: Mr. Orpen, Ms. Douglas and I have begun to map out the curriculum for the high school. In doing so, we've reviewed the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks that are required of all public schools, the required for graduation MCAS tests for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Technology and Engineering and History, and various College entry requirements. Every student that attends the high school will partake in the equivalent of four years each of mathematics, foreign language, science, history/government and English language and literature. In addition to the required coursework, students will complete internships as third year students (juniors) and a senior project in their fourth year. Technology and systems thinking concepts will be integrated throughout the curriculum and students will learn to use both sets of tools at a more in-depth level than we do now. Additionally, students will participate in internships during their third year and senior projects during their fourth year – please check our website for updates and more details on these areas.

The curriculum at the high school will not only more than cover the requirements of the best colleges and universities in the country, in addition it **will provide experiences for**

our students that will set them apart from the many applicants that these colleges and universities receive each year.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Will my 8th grader automatically be enrolled at the high school?

A. Current Murdoch students will be enrolled in the high school unless the family specifies otherwise. As in years past we will send out a packet that will have information regarding re-enrollment. You will need to complete the paperwork and return it in a timely fashion to ensure that your child holds their spot.

Q. What if my child plans to attend another high school?

A. While we hope that all of our MMCPS students will want to continue on at the high school level, we recognize that in some cases, there may be a better fit. If this is the case, you should contact Walter Landberg, Director as soon as possible so that the school can assist you in the process of enrolling elsewhere.

Q. How will the college application process work?

A. We will have a part-time college counselor by our second year of operation and, in our third year this person will be with us full time and will work closely with students to determine the appropriate college or universities to apply to, help families with the financial aid process and ensure success in the process.

Q. Will there be extra-curricular activities like sports and clubs?

A. Yes. We will have extra-curricular activities like sports and clubs. We are working on getting fields for playing, etc. and in looking for our temporary facility (see updates) we are giving high consideration to facilities with extra space for these kinds of things. In the first year these will be based on student interest. We plan to gauge student interest in the meetings we will have with each of the 8th grade families so that we can be ready for the fall. The activities program will have a base budget that will be supplemented by small fees. We anticipate that the program offerings will grow as our school grows.