

inside this issue

**Breakfast
at Blake –
R.S.V.P Today
Pg. 4**



Roger Hale '52

**Bearwear
Boutique Dec. 11
Pg. 5**



**Faculty Profile:
Jeff Jensen
Pg. 4**



**December 2009/
January 2010**

Student Assessment: Where Are We Now?

By Guest Columnist Assistant Head of School Lucretia Wells

Last spring in Parent News, I wrote about a school-wide initiative to evaluate Blake's assessment practices. The work is ongoing, and I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you how this important work is progressing.

Blake faculty continue to explore and define, first, how their students are learning and, second, what they learned. Our goal is to move students from asking their teachers, "What grade did I get?" to "How do you know what I know?" By changing the paradigm from traditional assessment at the end of a lesson, with no time to revisit the material, to one that helps our students better understand their own learning style, we teach them a greater level of engagement in learning, which better prepares our students for college and beyond. This is accomplished by helping frame what we believe to be more authentic dynamics of learning.

We launched the 2009–10 school year with a full day of faculty workshops on assessment. The morning was spent with six faculty members from all three divisions talking about the specific ways they each assess his or her students. Rick Cawood, a member of the Upper School English department, showed how his assessment is a detailed online communication process with his students. Rick sees the writing process as an evolution and conversation rather than lots of red marks on a student composition, but notes that the computer does not replace a student conference. Using online technology, Rick writes comments on a student piece through a dialogue box that allows the student to respond to his edit. This allows Rick to engage the student while keeping track of their exchange. In the past, a marked-up paper often went directly into a student knapsack only to be discovered at the end of the school year. Today, teachers are able to engage in conversation about edits and see how the students incorporate this feedback into their next draft.

Another example we saw was fifth grade teachers Jackie Robie and Kris Westberg's presentation on their use of rubrics. Because the Lower School does not use grades, they communicate student

progress through a narrative with rubrics. A rubric is a framework developed by a teacher as a means of indicating the most important elements of an assignment or activity. It not only helps a student to understand the key elements and expectations, but also allows the teacher and student to engage in a conversation with a common and explicit framework. For example, if a student knows he or she is expected to have a level of understanding about the scientific method and the teacher has indicated the key areas of understanding and the depth of knowledge, the student and teacher can look at the student's work and rubric to determine if he or she captured the key understanding and important elements.

With successful workshop days under their belt, the faculty are now investigating techniques for assessment that will help them to be certain they are getting an accurate read on what their students are learning. They remain flexible as they work to determine a student's level of understanding during the lesson so they can adjust the material accordingly. For example, through actively questioning and listening the teacher can determine the extent of understanding, add to the



Assistant Head of School
Lucretia Wells

continued on page 2

Student Assessment

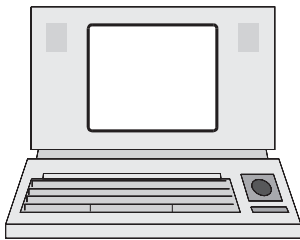
continued from page 1

lesson if needed, and move on to the next topic when student understanding is present. Table grading also is used, which allows teachers to collaborate with colleagues on the way they assess and grade student work in a similar course. For example, two teachers in the science department may pull a random test from one another's class, grade it and then pass it back to the other teacher, who would go through the same exercise. This is a common practice to allow two faculty members to calibrate with a colleague and address the often mythologized notion that "Mr. X grades so much harder than Mrs. Y." Our focus in this exercise is to have the teachers articulate to one another and the department chair why they gave the grade they did.

At Blake, our goal for this assessment work is to ensure we are transparent, intentional and consistent in how we view student work. Additionally, by involving students in the assessment process, they not only learn about what goes into their grade but are brought into the conversation to identify and articulate the key elements of the material they are studying. As we continually work to improve our own teaching and learning, we also are helping students appreciate how they develop as learners.

1:1 Laptop Initiative at Blake 2010–11

The Blake Board of Trustees has recently approved the Technology Advisory Committee's recommendation to proceed with an Upper School 1:1 laptop



program starting in the fall of 2010. Next year every Upper School student will be issued a school-owned MacBook laptop, complete with the software that supports the curriculum, for use at home and school. The decision to move to a 1:1 program stems directly from our mission and reflects the School's commitment to preparing students for the 21st century. Watch Blake's [web site](#) and future issues of Parent News and Blake Online, the School's technology newsletter, for updates and more information.



The Hollywood Classic Saturday, May 1, 2010

The spotlight will be trained on the Blake Ice Arena for The Hollywood Classic's premiere on Saturday, May 1, 2010.

I just want to say one word to you — just one word — CLASSIC.

The Hollywood Classic Committee needs your creativity and your generosity to set the stage for our children, the stars of tomorrow. Monies raised at our biennial all-school fund-raiser, Blake's 2010 Hollywood Classic, will be put to good use to further elevate their educational experience.

Please take a moment to visit the [Hollywood Classic page](#) on the Blake web site.

I'm gonna make you an offer you can't refuse. Donate some auction items, volunteer some hours to help and buy a ticket to the Hollywood Classic. And bring a friend. You won't regret it!

You've Selected Blake for Your Family — Now Invite Your Friends to Learn More About This Great School

Do you have friends, neighbors or colleagues who may be interested in Blake for their children? Do you have a child not yet at Blake? If so, the Admissions Office invites you and your friends to attend one of the following meetings:

Thursday, Dec. 3	Pre-kindergarten through Grade 5 A Morning at Blake Lower School, Highcroft campus, 9–11:30 a.m.
Saturday, Jan. 9	Pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 Financial Aid Workshop Blake campus, 9–11 a.m.
Monday, Jan. 11	Grades 9–12 Information Meeting for Parents and Students Upper School, Northrop campus, 7–9 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 13	Pre-kindergarten through Grade 8 Information Meeting Blake campus, 6:45–9 p.m. (Prospective Middle School students are welcome to attend with their parents.)

The 2010–11 application deadline is Jan. 31, 2010. Please call the Admissions Office at (952) 988-3420 for more information.

Deadline Extended For Parent Association Leadership Nominations

The Parent Association Nominating Committee will meet in December to consider next year's parent leadership nominations. Our mission is to elect parent volunteers for the 2010–11 school year for the following Parent Association executive and divisional leadership positions:

Three-year Commitment — Overall Parent Association Leader

First Vice President (President–elect)

(Year 1 as Vice President, Year 2 as President, Year 3 as Nominating Chair)

Three-year Commitment

Parent Association Representative to the Board of Trustees

Two-year Commitment

Second Vice President (Fund-raising Coordinator)

One-year Commitment

Executive Committee Secretary

Two-year Commitment — Division Level Leaders

(Year 1 as Campus Vice Chair, Year 2 as Campus Chair)

Lower School Vice Chair, Blake campus

Lower School Vice Chair, Highcroft campus

Middle School Vice Chair

Upper School Vice Chair

One-year Commitment

Lower School Secretary, Blake campus

Lower School Secretary, Highcroft campus

Middle School Secretary

Upper School Secretary

Please refer to the Parent Association [bylaws](#) for a full description of these positions.

Please consider serving in one of these leadership roles. If you are interested, or you know a Blake parent you think should be considered, please contact Parent Association Nominating Chair Leslie Carpenter by Dec. 6 at parent_association@blakeschool.org.

Teaching Self-Advocacy to Kids With Learning Differences

All-School Parent Support Group Meeting

Monday, Jan. 25 8:45–10 a.m.

Pillsbury Conference Room

A can-do attitude and the art of self-advocacy are two especially important skills for students with learning differences to master. How can parents best help their children with ADHD and other differences develop these necessary skills? Come join an informal conversation with fellow parents from all grade levels who will share struggles and success stories. Which approaches work? Which do not?

Come learn parenting techniques to help you begin to feel more confident about your child's future. For more information about this parent-led support group, please contact Etta Barry.

Notice of New Changes in Financial Aid Policies

After a yearlong examination of School policies and economic trends, and upon the recommendation of the School Committee, chaired by Robin Hartwell, the Board of Trustees approved the following changes in the administration of The Blake School's financial aid program (effective 2010–11):

1. Increase the range of the School's financial aid commitment from 12.5–13.5% of tuition and fees to 13.0–14.0% of tuition and fees.
2. Break out “need-based” financial aid as a separate line item on Blake's budget differentiating it from “tuition remission” as the two portions of financial aid.
3. Cap need-based financial aid awards to individual families at 2.5 times Blake's highest divisional tuition. Cap tuition remission awards at the total salary of the Blake employee. (Current students receiving financial aid are grandfathered.)
4. Continue to be need-blind in admissions in grades 1–12, while remaining flexible with PK and K entry points.
5. Continue to allocate the financial aid budget to the divisions in the same manner: 25% Lower School, 25% Middle School and 50% Upper School.
6. Continue to make commitments at 100% demonstrated need as long as it is understood that Blake makes the final determination of demonstrated need based upon knowledge of family situations, not just outside service (SSS) calculations.
7. Set specific longer-term targets that will position financial aid where it needs to be in support of Blake's strategic plan. Specifically, target 20–25% of the student body as a healthy range for socio-economic diversity. Also, reposition the School to attract more middle class families.
8. Current students with demonstrated need will be given first priority over new families in the awarding of limited financial aid dollars. Second priority will be given students entering grades 6 and 9.

In approving these recommendations, the Board reconfirmed the School's commitment to socio-economic pluralism as we balance the overall budget in a full-enrollment environment. These policies also address a fair way of allocating scarce dollars and allow the Financial Aid Office to set expectations early instead of disappointing families later. Families have the opportunity to proactively plan their Blake experience, particularly the timing of entry into the School. According to Director of Financial Aid Cheryl Cooper Boyd, “Given the current economic climate and greater demand for financial aid, these policies provide clarity and direction to our financial aid program here at Blake.”

2008–09 Parent Association Fund-raising Report

Thanks to your support of the 2008–09 divisional and all-school fund-raisers, you can see new equipment, furnishings and enhancements to our School that are already in place and benefiting our students' learning environment.

The Blake and Highcroft Lower School campuses raised \$29,552.57 through Book Fairs, Box Tops for Education and the Target program. These funds paid for four SMART Boards on each campus and also will be used to purchase a document camera for each campus.

The magazine drive and the Target program earned \$27,004.44 for the Middle School. These funds were used to purchase Promethean boards for the classrooms and the library and to enhance the beautiful new Dodge entry. They also were used to purchase the high-definition cameras for Blake News Network.

Jamba Juice sales and the Target program raised \$5,786.73 for the Upper School. With funds accrued from previous years and additional contributions from the Parent Association and the School, we were able to replace the furniture for the junior, senior and east lounges in the Upper School.

The Booster Club raised more than \$20,000 through Bearwear and concession sales. These funds were used to hire a soccer goalie coach, to purchase 50 band/orchestra chairs for the MPAC stage, to purchase new seating for the MPAC lobby, to fund a table at the Athena Awards banquet, to update the championship banners for our teams, and to fund bus transportation to the state tournaments for our students.

The Parent Association thanks you for your continued and generous support of all these important school fund-raisers. We are always looking for opportunities to maximize our fund-raising efforts, which will produce more revenue for our School and encourage community unity. Have a good idea? Please contact Stacey Graiziger.



Join Us for Breakfast at Blake!

Meet and mingle with our great alumni and parent community. Hear interesting speakers on relevant topics — business, sports, arts, music and more!

A complimentary breakfast buffet will be served. Please R.S.V.P. by Thursday, Jan. 14 to Sarah at (952) 988-3445 or advancementsvp@blakeschool.org.

Speaker: Roger Hale '52
Board Chair of the Ploughshares Fund
Thursday, Jan. 21, 2010
7:30–8:30 a.m.
Upper School, Cherne Forum



Roger Hale is the board chair of the Ploughshares Fund, the largest grantmaking foundation in the United States dedicated exclusively to supporting initiatives to prevent the spread and use of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and other weapons of war. Hale was president and CEO of Tennant, an industry-leading manufacturer of industrial and commercial floor maintenance equipment, from 1976 to 1998 and was a director of five NYSE companies during his career. He has served on the boards of the Walker Art Center and Public Radio International. He is a graduate of Brown University and Harvard Business School and served as an officer in the U.S. Navy from 1956 to 1959.

faculty profile

Jeff Jensen

By Linda Thrasher



Other than unlocking doors and turning on lights at the Highcroft campus in Wayzata each weekday morning, there is no such thing as a typical day for lead maintenance person Jeff Jensen. But the unpredictability is exactly what Jensen likes about his problem-solving position.

Jensen oversees one employee and a host of contractors who help make the Highcroft facility and grounds look simultaneously impeccable and inviting. Behind the scenes Jensen and his maintenance teammate are responsible for everything from changing belts and filters on equipment to setting up for school events and assisting teachers with classroom needs.

Jensen's knack for fixing things and willingness to help does not stop with Highcroft's facilities or faculty members. Last year he helped pre-kindergarten students build birdhouses in his workshop. On occasion, Jensen has even been called on to chaperone field trips. "I have an interest in personally getting to know these kids," observes Jensen. "It's easier for them to respect me and this facility once they know who I am."

Jensen joined the Blake staff in 2002 as the security supervisor on the Upper School campus. He transferred to Highcroft in 2006. His goal is to be able to conduct as much proactive maintenance as possible, staying ahead of ongoing issues that may arise as the facility ages. Jensen also helps with security on the campus.

Outside of his job, Jensen can be found playing or coaching nearly any sport, including hockey, basketball, baseball and softball. Of course, it is not always easy to leave at work what you do best. Admittedly, Jensen enjoys building and fixing things at home too. He and his wife, LeAnn, are the proud parents of three children.



Cool Blake Programs for Hot Summer Months

If you are starting to think about summer plans, be sure to consider all that Blake has to offer. We already have begun assembling a spectacular assortment of recreational programs to keep your family active all summer long!

Camp Acoma: Camp Acoma continues its 40-year tradition of providing engaging, supervised activities with three age-group options to choose from: Cubs (ages 4–5), Bears (ages 6–11) and Leadership Camp (ages 12–15).

Academics: As in the past, we will continue to offer a selection of academic courses for students who want to accelerate their learning or to work more deeply within specific subject areas including math, science and language arts.

Athletics: Be sure to check out our fantastic athletic camps. Our popular lacrosse and soccer camps are returning this summer along with baseball, basketball, swimming and archery.

Enrichment: Blake's summer enrichment program provides fun academic and creative exploration for children. Check out the robotics, rocketry, video game design, chess camps and other offerings.

You may choose between a half schedule, which allows you to mix and match activities, or a full-day program. Look for more specific information coming in January 2010. If you have any questions or suggestions do not hesitate to contact Summer Programs Director David Cole at (952) 988-3463 or dcole@blakeschool.org.

Unauthorized Use of The Blake School Directories is Strictly Prohibited

Blake directories are for official School/parent/alumni use, as well as for individual communication of a personal nature between members listed within. Use of the directories for any other purpose including, but not limited to, reproducing and storing in a retrieval system by any means, electronic or mechanical, photocopying or using the addresses or other information contained within the directories for any private, commercial or political mailing is strictly prohibited and is a direct violation of copyright and constitutes misappropriation of corporate property.

Come Shop at the Annual Bearwear Holiday Boutique Friday, Dec. 11



Mark your calendar for the upcoming Holiday Bearwear Boutique on Friday, Dec. 11, sponsored by the Blake Booster Club. Boutique hours for faculty and staff members begin at 8–8:30 a.m. and then open to all the school until 4 pm. Check out the new Bearwear merchandise including sweatshirts, sweatpants, T-shirts, winter items and accessories. Bearwear purchases may be made with cash, check or charge to your Blake account. All proceeds support the extra-curricular activities including arts, student activities and athletics at The Blake School. For those unable to attend, a reminder that Bearwear merchandise may also be purchased at the Booster store located adjacent to the Athletic Office in the Middle School Tuesday through Thursday from 3 to 4 pm. Questions? Please contact parents Norma Leslie or Susan Morris.

CNN Presents: Caucasian in America

By Ruth O'Neill

Demographics in this country are changing faster than ketchup became salsa. Based on findings from the 2000 census, 75 percent of people living in the United States in 2090 will be people of color. But we need not gaze into a crystal ball to see the dramatic shifts already occurring in our nation's demographics. When our current high school seniors come face to face with their college classmates next fall, 33 percent of those faces may not be Caucasian. When current pre-kindergarten children meet their college roommates, that number will top 40 percent.

These numbers are not news to Head of School John Gulla, the Board of Trustees or to Blake's Center for Diversity Director Donna Albro. For a number of years now the School's mission statement has included in it the goal of educating students to be culturally competent global citizens. "At this School we define cultural competence as 'the will and ability to form authentic and effective relationships across differences,'" says Albro. "In order to teach students to be citizens of the world, we must continue to grow to become a more diverse and vibrant community. We must continue to recruit a diverse group of students, faculty members and administrators because every adult in our community is a mentor who will influence and shape the mindsets of our children and how they see the world."

By "diverse" Albro means far more than just racial inclusion. Here at Blake diversity includes ethnicity, national origin, geography, religion, gender, affectional or sexual orientation, age, physical ability, and marital, parental or economic status. "We will have failed our students if we do not teach them how to move through the world as responsible, compassionate and action-oriented citizens of the world," says Albro. "It is our hope and goal that Blake graduates be both willing and able to interact with classmates, teachers, employers and neighbors whose life experiences are entirely different than their own."

This year students at every campus will have the pleasure of working with Albro and a host of other adults who will help them to develop a greater self-awareness, a better sensitivity toward all people, and a more complete understanding of why embracing pluralism is so connected to excellence in education. Albro and Lower School Director Barry Wadsworth are working with parents of more than 26 young students of color to explore ways to enhance and expand the social experiences of all students and their parents in this community. Middle School students are exploring cultural competency with Albro and Heather Jackson from LearningWorks during their health and wellness classes, and all freshmen at the Upper School are taking a class called Perspectives on Pluralism, or POP.

One particular exercise Albro employs in POP is to have students keep a running list of words that may not seem offensive at first, but on closer examination might in fact show incredible ignorance and insensitivity. "Lame," "crazy" and "moron" at first blush may have been believed to be casual, harmless terms, but what if you are talking to a professor who has a physical disability, or joking around with a roommate whose mother has a mental illness, or watching a football game with a neighbor whose twin brother lives in an institution due to a mental disability? Whoops! Your ignorance is showing! You are probably risking more than just being politically incorrect or hurting someone's feelings. You also may be missing out on the opportunity to connect with another human being and to learn



Dr. Carlos Cortes, author of several well-known books on diversity and the creative and cultural advisor for Nickelodeon's "Dora the Explorer" and "Go, Diego, Go!," led a faculty workshop this past summer at Blake (pictured above) and will return to Blake Feb. 22-26 to meet the Blake community and be featured as the School's 18th annual diversity symposium speaker on Feb. 23.

something new. Perhaps you just alienated someone who could have been a colleague, a friend, a business partner — or your new boss.

Many adults over 40 years of age never dreamed that in their lifetime an African American would be elected president of the United States. "For kids today having a leader who looks like President Barack Obama is already their normal," says Albro. "Psychic underpinnings like this greatly influence how today's kids think and act. This can create a vast gap between the cultural mindsets of children and their parents. Our historical past is so different than what our children's will be, which is why parent education must continue to be a significant component of our pluralism plan."

To illustrate her point, Albro encourages parents to do an online web search of the demographics of their college alma mater. She also suggests visiting the web sites of the colleges and universities your child might be interested in to see exact percentages of students of color attending: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 13%; Carleton College, 23%; University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, 28%; Dartmouth, 34%; Yale, 37%; and Stanford, 55%. "If our students do not develop a full sense of cultural competence and an ability to move in and through their college years and the 21st century, they will be at a severe disadvantage."

So get ready for the future! We invite you to attend Blake's 18th Annual Diversity Symposium. Come hear acclaimed author and our featured speaker Dr. Carlos Cortes on Tuesday, Feb. 23. Dr. Cortes is the author of several well-known books on diversity including "The Children Are Watching: How the Media Teach about Diversity" and "Backing into the Future: Opportunities and Challenges of our Multicultural 21st Century." He also is a creative and cultural advisor for Nickelodeon's Peabody-award-winning children's television series "Dora the Explorer" and its sequel, "Go, Diego, Go!" Dr. Cortes, who led a faculty workshop this summer at Blake, returns to the School Feb. 22-26 to meet with students, faculty, administrators, parents and members of the greater Blake community. Mark this event on your calendar now! For questions please contact [Donna Albro](mailto:Donna.Albro@blakeschool.org) or go to blakeschool.org/program_services/diversity.aspx.

All-School

WINTER BREAK

Winter break begins at the end of the school day on Friday, Dec. 18. Classes resume on Monday, Jan. 4.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

There will be no school on Monday, Jan. 18 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

BREAKFAST AT BLAKE

Breakfast at Blake will be held on Thursday, Jan.

21 from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. in the Cherne Forum on the Northrop campus. All Blake parents and alumni are invited to attend. The speaker will be Roger Hale '52. A hot breakfast will be served. Please R.S.V.P. to Sarah at (952) 988-3445 or advancementsvp@blakeschool.org by Thursday, Jan. 14.

December			January		
DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
12/1	Live@Blake	7-9 pm US	1/9	PK-12 Financial Aid Workshop	9-11 am BC
12/2	Student Services PK-12 Parent Workshop	8:45-10 am PCR	1/12	Student Services PK-12 Parent Workshop	8:45-10 am PCR
12/8	Live@Blake	7-9 pm US	1/18	No School PK-12 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	
12/9	Student Services PK-12 Parent Group	7:30-8:30 am PCR	1/19	Student Services PK-12 Parent Workshop	8:45-10 am PCR
12/11	Hanukkah Begins At Sunset		1/21	Breakfast At Blake (Roger Hale '52)	7:30-8:30 am Cherne
	Bearwear Holiday Boutique	8:30 am-4 pm PCR	1/25	Student Services PK-12 Parent Group	8:45-10 am PCR
12/18	Winter Break Begins After Classes		1/31	Deadline For Admissions/Financial Aid Apps For New Students	
12/19	Hanukkah Ends At Sunset				
12/25	Christmas				

January			February		
DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
1/1	New Year's Day		2/2	Admissions Re-enrollment Contracts Mailed	
1/4	PK-12 Classes Resume			Live@Blake	7-9 pm US
			2/5	National African American Parent Involvement Day	

December and January Parent Education Classes

Our goal in Student Services is to take good care of kids. One way we do that is by helping train the trainers, which is you, the parents. Parenting is and should be the primary influence on children. We strive to supplement and support parents. Visit Blake's web site for a full [calendar listing](#) of this year's parent education events.

Strategies to Enhance Executive Functioning Skills — open to all parents
Wednesday, Dec. 2, 8:45-10 a.m., PCR

Fathers' Group — discussion about the joys and challenges of parenting
Wednesday, Dec. 9, 7:30-8:30 a.m., PCR

Parental Self-Care: How to maintain physical and mental health for optimal parenting — open to all parents
Tuesday, Jan. 12, 8:45-10 a.m., PCR

Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls — open to all parents
Tuesday, Jan. 19, 8:45-10 a.m., PCR

Support Group for Parents of children with learning differences/disabilities — open to all parents
Monday, Jan. 25, 8:45-10 a.m., PCR

Parent Communication Workshop — grade 1 parents only
Thursday, Jan. 28, 7-9 p.m., PCR

A Tradition of Giving Back to Blake: The Annual Fund

Among the many traditions we celebrate here at Blake is the one of giving back to the School. Each year Blake parents, grandparents, alumni, employees and friends demonstrate their belief in the mission of this School by supporting the Annual Fund.



The Annual Fund is an opportunity for you to support the people and programs that make Blake special. Gifts to the Annual Fund provide crucial financial aid and opportunities for teachers to become even better at their craft. Your donations also help provide classroom supplies, athletic equipment, art materials and much, much more.

What better time than the holiday season to continue this tradition of giving back? There is still time to make a tax-deductible gift to the Blake 2009-10 Annual Fund before the year's end. Please consider calling the Advancement Office at (952) 988-3430 or donating online.

Double or triple your gift! Many companies will match charitable contributions made by their employees. To find out if your company participates in a matching gift program that could double or triple the amount of your gift, please click [HERE](#).

Thank you for your support!

Lower School

JOINT PARENT ASSOCIATION MEETING/PARENT EDUCATION NIGHT

Please join us for the December joint Lower School Parent Association meeting and Parent Education Night on Thursday, Dec. 3. A lite bite will be available at 6 p.m. with the meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the MacMillan Performing Arts Center on the Blake campus in Hopkins. There will be a brief administrative update and information on volunteering at Blake followed by the featured speaker, Lower School Director Barry Wadsworth, who will address "How Blake Lower School Meets Its Full Range of Learners."

LOWER SCHOOL USED SKATE SWAP

There will be a skate swap from Dec. 7 to 11 and again from Jan. 4 to 15 on the Highcroft campus and from Jan. 4 to Feb. 12 on the Blake campus. Please drop off your child's gently used skates and look for a replacement pair in the swap boxes. We also will collect skating helmets that are still in safe working condition. Swap boxes will be set up outside the Lower School offices.

PARENT ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Please join us Monday, Jan. 11 from 8:30 to 10 a.m. in the Bovey Chapel for the Blake campus and Thursday, Jan. 14 from 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. in the Highcroft Meeting Room for the Highcroft campus.

NOON DISMISSAL

All Lower School students will be dismissed at noon on Friday, Jan. 15. Extended Day is available. Watch eFriday folders to register.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY — NO EXTENDED DAY

There will be no school on Monday, Jan. 18 in

observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Extended Day is not available.

FAMILY SERVICES LEARNING NIGHT

Lower School families from the Blake and Highcroft campuses are invited to come together as a community to participate in service learning projects with their children on Thursday, Jan. 21 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Bovey Chapel.

GRADES 1 & 2 PARENT PARTY

Parents of first and second grade students will have their parent party on Saturday, Jan. 23 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The Blake campus party will take place in the Pillsbury Conference Room and the Highcroft party will be held in the Highcroft foyer.

GRADE 1 PARENT COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

There will be an opportunity on Thursday, Jan. 28 from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Pillsbury Conference Room for first grade parents to develop parent-to-parent lines of communication as they embark upon the Lower School journey. Counselor Jon Halpern will facilitate this workshop on how to enter into conversations with other parents now, when the stakes are significantly lower than in the coming years.

WINTERFEST

Winterfest will take place on the **Highcroft campus** on Tuesday, Jan. 26 from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m. in the gymnasium and outside on the ice rink. Please join us for this fun winter event including skating, fun in the snow and more. Contact Janna Lundberg or Sheri Rosoff with questions.

The **Blake campus** Winterfest (formerly the Ice Skating Party) will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 2 from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m. in the ice arena. Join us for a cool time on ice. Contact Molly Cronin or Aimee Mairs with questions.

Watch eFriday folders for more information, to volunteer and to register.

*Susan Hitchner Fluke, vice chair, Blake campus
Aleya Champlin, vice chair, Highcroft campus
Lower School Parent Association*

LiteracyFest Thank You!

Book Fair Chairs Anne Kurowski and Staci Richardson, Guest Author Liaison Mary Sue Vorbrich, New Book Chairs Julie Monahan and Kate Tabner, Book Exchange Coordinators Carolyn Chou and Lisa Dejas, Boutique Chairs Patty Chenitz and Annica Hedlund, Raffle Coordinator Maryellen Seeley, and Volunteer Coordinators Jeanette Colby and Cathy Fine wish to give their heartfelt thanks to the many parent volunteers, faculty, staff and friends in the Blake community who gave so generously of their time, energy and talent to make LiteracyFest such a wonderful and fun event for our children! Thank you also to everyone who donated used books, shopped for books and Boutique items, purchased raffle tickets and supported the Lower School's annual literacy and spirit-building event!

Proceeds from LiteracyFest will be used to purchase technology for both the Blake and Highcroft campuses.

December			January		
DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
12/3	Admissions Morning LS Joint Parent Assoc Mtg. & Parent Ed. Night	8:45–11:30 am HC 6–8 pm MPAC	1/21	LS Family Service Learning Night	6:30–8:30 pm Bovey
			1/23	Gr. 1 & 2 LSH Parent Party Gr. 1 & 2 LSB Parent Party	5:30–7:30 pm HC Foyer 5:30–7:30 pm PCR
			1/26	LSH Winterfest	3:30–4:15 pm HC
			1/28	Gr. 1 Parent Communication Workshop	7–9 pm PCR
January			February		
DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
1/11	LSB Parent Association Mtg.	8:30–10 am Bovey			
1/13	PK-8 Admissions Information Mtg.	6:45–9 pm MPAC			
1/14	LSH Parent Association Mtg.	11:15 am–12:45 pm HMR			
1/15	LS/MS Noon Dismissal		2/2	LSB Winterfest	3:30–4:15 pm Ice Arena
1/18	No School PK–12 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday		2/4	LS Joint Parent Assoc. Mtg./Curriculum Night	6–9 pm HC

For contact phone numbers and e-mail addresses, please use [The Blake School online directory](#) (found in password-protected BlakeNet). Other questions? Send an e-mail to parent_association@blakeschool.org.

Middle School

PARENT ASSOCIATION MEETING

The December Parent Association meeting will take place on Friday, Dec. 4 from 8:30 to 10:15 a.m. in the Pillsbury Conference Room. New faculty members Brian Sago (art) and Chris Garland (social studies) will be discussing their curriculum and backgrounds.

Please mark your calendars for the first Parent Association meeting of the new year on Friday, Jan. 8.

BUSINESS DAY

Everyone is welcome to come and shop at the eighth grade Business Day on Friday, Dec. 4 from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Blake campus dining room. Come and support our fledgling entrepreneurs as they apply the lessons of market research, cost and expenses, advertising and basic economics.

GRADES 7 & 8 WINTER WONDERLAND DANCE

All seventh and eighth graders are encouraged to get psyched for the Winter Wonderland Dance! The dance will be held Friday, Jan. 22 from 7:30 to 10 p.m. in the Middle School cafeteria. Admission will be \$5. Please remember that students may not arrive after 8 p.m. without a note from home and must be picked up promptly at 10 p.m. Students will not be allowed to walk home from the dance.

GRADE 6 DANCE LESSONS

The fun continues with our next sixth grade dance lessons that are scheduled for Friday,

Jan. 29 and Friday, Feb. 19. Both will take place in the Blake campus dining room from 7 to 9 p.m. If your child was unable to attend the first dance lesson, encourage him or her to attend the remaining sessions. If you have questions or would like to chaperone, please contact Joanne Patterson or Andrea Schemel.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TALENT SHOW

Prepare to be dazzled by the showmanship of our talented Middle School students and faculty on Friday, Dec. 18 at 2 p.m. in the MacMillan Performing Arts Center. Come and enjoy a great show!

WINTER MUSICAL PERFORMANCES

Middle School and Upper School Strings Concert — Monday, Dec. 7

Middle School BoyChoir, Treble Choir and Integrated Arts Concert — Monday, Dec. 14

Chorus 6, Choristers — Tuesday, Dec. 15

Middle School Band Concert — Tuesday, Jan. 12

All performances begin at 7:30 p.m. in the MacMillan Performing Arts Center with a reception to follow in the Bovey Chapel.

LEARNING LUNCHES

All Middle School parents are welcome to join Middle School Director Joe Seivold for parent learning lunches from noon to 1 p.m. in the Pillsbury Conference Room. Please join us for a delicious lunch and interesting discussions on a

variety of topics concerning our Middle School students.

Grade 6 – Tuesday, Jan. 12

Grade 7 – Tuesday, Jan. 19

Grade 8 – Tuesday, Jan. 26

*Donna Magarian, vice chair
Middle School Parent Association*

A Gentle Holiday Reminder about Blake's Gift Policy

We respectfully request that parents and guardians do not collect money for gifts for any teacher, coach or staff member. Staff members at all three divisions are recognized by the Parent Association for birthdays, holidays and special occasions and by the School administration for outstanding work. However, an individual family may choose to recognize any teacher. In that case, we suggest that books, games or other educational materials be donated to the School in a teacher's name. Students may want to give individual teachers homemade cards or gifts.

December			January		
DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
12/4	Gr. 8 Business Day MS Parent Association Mtg.	1–3 pm BDR 8:45–10:15 am PCR	1/12	Gr. 6 Learning Lunch MS Band Concert	Noon–1 pm PCR 7:30 pm MPAC
12/7	MS/US Strings Concert	7:30 pm MPAC	1/13	PK-8 Admissions Information Mtg.	6:45–9 pm MPAC
12/10	Student Services MS/US Parent Workshop	11:30 am–12:45pm PCR	1/15	LS/MS Noon Dismissal MS Quarter 2 Ends	
12/14	MS BoyChoir/Treble Choir/ IA 8 Winter Concert	7:30 pm MPAC	1/18	No School PK-12 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	
12/15	MS Chorus 6 & Choristers Winter Concert	7:30 pm MPAC	1/19	Gr. 7 Learning Lunch	Noon–1 pm PCR
12/18	MS Talent Show	2 pm MPAC	1/22	Gr. 7 & 8 Dance	7:30–10 pm BDR
			1/26	Gr. 8 Learning Lunch	Noon–1 pm PCR
			1/29	Gr. 6 Dance Lesson #2	7–9 pm BDR
January			February		
DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
1/8	MS Parent Association Mtg.	8:45–10:15 am PCR	2/5	MS Parent Association Mtg.	8:45–10:15 am PCR

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Upper School

UPPER SCHOOL WINTER BAND AND CHOIR CONCERTS

The Upper School choirs will present their winter concert on Tuesday, Dec. 1 at 7:30 p.m. in the MacMillan Performing Arts Center (MPAC). The Middle and Upper School strings concert will take place on Monday, Dec. 7 at 7:30 p.m. in the MPAC. The Upper School bands will perform their winter concert in the MPAC on Wednesday, Dec. 9 at 7:30 p.m.

GRADES 9 & 12 COFFEES WITH THE DEANS

Ninth Grade Dean Dion Crushshon will meet with parents on Thursday, Dec. 3 and Thursday, Feb. 4 from 8 to 9 a.m. in the Cherne Forum. Twelfth Grade Dean Alyn Eastin will meet with parents on Thursday, Jan. 7 from 8 to 9 a.m., also in the Cherne Forum.

SAT TESTING

SAT testing will take place Saturday, Dec. 5 and Saturday, Jan. 23 at the Upper School. Students should arrive between 7:30-7:45 a.m.

WINTER SNO BALL DANCE

This year's winter dance for Upper School students will take place on Saturday, Dec. 5 from 8:30 to 11:30 p.m. at the Upper School.

US ADVANCED THEATER PRODUCTION

Students in Advanced Theater Production will perform on Thursday, Dec. 10 at 7:30 p.m. in the Adams Black Box Theater.

SSAT TESTING

On Saturday, Dec. 12, Saturday, Jan. 9 and Saturday, Feb. 6, SSAT testing will take place in the Upper School library from 8 a.m. to noon.

MID-YEAR EXAMS BEFORE WINTER BREAK

Exam dates are Wednesday, Dec. 16 through Friday, Dec. 18. Not all classes will offer a mid-term exam. Monday, Dec. 14 and Tuesday, Dec. 15 will be review days for classes in which an exam will be given. Homerooms will not meet on exam days. Lunch will be served both days. Please review [The Link](#) for final details about exam-day schedules. Students will be responsible for knowing their exam schedule. Winter break begins after mid-terms on Friday, and classes will resume on Monday, Jan. 4.

STUDENT DIRECTED PLAYS

Plays directed by Upper School students will be presented on Thursday, Jan. 7 at 7:30 p.m. in the Adams Black Box Theater.

SEMESTER I ENDS

The first semester ends Friday, Jan. 15.

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION MEETING

There will be an open house on Monday, Jan. 11 from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Juliet Nelson Auditorium for new admissions in grades nine through twelve. Please share information about this event with interested friends and encourage them to attend the meeting.

PARENT ASSOCIATION MEETING

The Parent Association will not meet in December. The January meeting will be held on Monday, Jan. 11 in the Cherne Forum from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. A light buffet lunch will be served beginning at 11:15 a.m.

SOPHOMORE COLLEGE NIGHT WITH THE DEAN

The College Counseling team and Dean Jim Mahoney will meet with parents of sophomores on Wednesday, Jan. 13 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. in the Juliet Nelson Auditorium. The beginning steps in the college application process will be introduced along with information about junior seminar and SAT/ACT testing. Dessert will be served before the program.

*Maureen Rudd, vice chair
Upper School Parent Association*

December			January		
DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
12/1	US Choral Concert	7:30 pm MPAC	1/7	Gr. 12 Coffee with the Dean	8-9 am Forum
12/3	Gr. 9 Coffee with the Dean	8-9 am Forum		US Student Directed Plays	7:30 pm US Black Box
12/5	SAT Testing	7:30 am-1 pm US	1/8	US Student Directed Plays	7:30 pm US Black Box
	US Sno Ball Dance	8:30-11:30 pm US	1/9	SSAT	8 am-Noon US Library
12/7	MS/US Strings Concert	7:30 pm MPAC	1/11	US Parent Association Meeting	11:15 am-1 pm Forum
12/9	US Band Concert	7:30 pm MPAC		US Admissions Information Mtg.	7-9 pm JNA
12/10	Student Services MS/US Parent Workshop	11:30 am-12:45pm PCR	1/13	Gr. 10 Dessert with the Dean	6:30-9 pm JNA
	US Advanced Theater Prod. Performance	7:30 pm US Black Box	1/15	US 1st Semester Ends	
12/12	ACT	Off Campus	1/16	Junior College Day/Alumni College Fair	7:30 am-3 pm US
	SSAT	8 am-Noon US Library	1/18	No School PK-12 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	
12/16-18	US Mid-year Exams		1/23	SAT Testing	7:30 am-1 pm US
12/18	Jack Edie Holiday Debate Tournament	8 am-8 pm Off Campus	February		
	US Open Mic Night	7-9 pm US	DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
12/19	Jack Edie Holiday Debate Tournament	8 am-8 pm Off Campus	2/4	Gr. 9 Coffee with the Dean	8-9 am Forum
12/20	Jack Edie Holiday Debate Tournament	8 am-5 pm Off Campus	2/6	ACT	Off Campus
				SSAT	8 am-Noon US Library

Severe Weather School Cancellations/Early Dismissals

While we will always try to keep school open whenever we are scheduled to be in session, there are rare occasions when the weather requires us to close School for the day or close early on a particular day. The determining factor is safety, and the decision usually rests on the ability of the bus drivers to safely complete their routes.

When the weather invites such consideration, parents should always exercise their own best judgment regarding the safety of their children when deciding whether to bring them to school or to allow children to drive. Any school closing announcement will be recorded by 6 a.m. on our severe weather hotline at (952) 988-3444. Closings will be reported on WCCO Radio (830 AM), KSTP TV (channel 5), WCCO TV (channel 4), KMSP TV (channel 9) and KARE TV (channel 11). Closing information also will be posted on [Blake's web site](#) and you will receive an ALERTNOW phone or text message.

The Blake School provides students with an excellent, academically challenging education in a diverse and supportive community committed to a common set of values. Students are expected to participate in an integrated program of academic, artistic and athletic activities in preparation for college, lifelong learning, community service and lives as responsible world citizens.

Love of Learning • Integrity • Respect • Courage



Challenging the mind, engaging the heart

PARENT NEWS is published under the auspices of the Communications Office and the Parent Association. Deadline for information submissions is the first of the month prior to issue date.

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CODES: MPAC—MacMillan Performing Arts Center;
PCR—Pillsbury Conference Room;
US—Upper School; MS—Middle School; LSB—Lower School Blake Campus; LSH—Lower School Highcroft Campus; LS—Lower School, both locations; BC—Blake Campus; CCR—Crosby Conference Room; NSDR—Northrop Campus Small Dining Room; BDR—Blake Campus Dining Room; HDR—Highcroft Campus Dining Room;
BLCR—Blake Lower Conference Room;
MTC—Middle School Media/Technology Center;
JNA—US Juliet Nelson Auditorium;
HMR—Highcroft Meeting Room.