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February 2010

Strengthening a 14-Year Curriculum

By Head of School John Gulla

One of the greatest strengths we have as a pre-kindergarten through grade twelve school is the opportunity to create a well-designed, coherent 14-year course of study. While not all of our graduates are with us at Blake from pre-kindergarten through senior year, some are, and all deserve the most carefully scaffolded, thoughtfully created and seamless curriculum we can forge.

When Blake, Northrop and Highcroft merged in the early 1970s, it might, perhaps, have been a good idea for the School to have undertaken the curricular equivalent of zero-based budgeting. Instead, the three school's curricula were merged and, nearly 40 years later, the current Blake curriculum is a fascinating palimpsest that reveals its provenance, if you dig deeply. For years we had Upper School department chairs, Middle School department chairs and Lower School curriculum coordinators. It was only quite recently that a new administrative structure was introduced to provide more "vertical integration" to the curriculum.

We wanted one person at Blake to be charged with looking at math, one person at language, one person at arts education, etc. From our youngest students who are asking fundamentally important questions about the concept of number to those who are grappling with calculus and statistics, from those who are learning their first phonemes to those who are relishing Shakespeare's use of language, from those who are exploring line and form and color with their crayons to those who are denizens of the Northrop studios, our students deserve a well-crafted curriculum that flows and builds upon itself. The PK-12 chairs work with faculty, division directors and others to craft such a curriculum. These PK-12 chairs serve as in-house disciplinary experts whose responsibilities include working with the departmentalized faculty in the Upper and Middle Schools and with all faculty in the Lower School. They work closely with the three division directors in supporting and evaluating all

Blake faculty, and they are charged with staying current with best practices and developing technologies and other innovations in their respective fields.



Head of School John Gulla

It is a given that many Lower School teachers at Blake (and in lower schools elsewhere) are generalists, while most middle and upper school teachers are disciplinary specialists. The PK-12 department chairs can provide some of the expertise of a scientist or an historian to their colleagues in the Lower School. The chairs can also work with faculty at all levels of the School to develop what we call "essential questions" that will become connective themes throughout the 14-year study of a given subject.

The idea of an essential question is fundamentally important to the design of our curriculum. For example, a question such as "What is matter made of?" can be answered on one level in kindergarten with, perhaps, some reference to the idea of atoms and Democritus, at another more sophisticated level in sixth grade with a study of molecules, atoms, elements and the periodic table, and at yet another level of complexity in the junior year with a study of quarks and leptons. An example from social studies might include a pre-kindergarten essential question "What is a community?" By third grade that essential question becomes "How does a community meet its people's needs?" In Middle School the question might

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14-Year Curriculum

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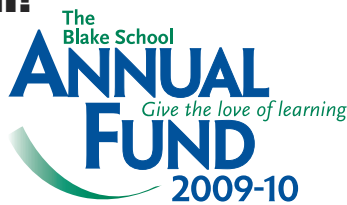
be “What’s culture, how does it change and what is the relationship between culture and community?” and in the ninth grade, essential questions could include “What are the perspectives of different groups? How does one’s identity affect one’s perspective? Why is it important to understand other’s perspectives?” In tenth grade we might ask “What does it mean to be an American?”

The first PK–12 chair we hired is only in his fifth year in this role, and 2009–10 is only the second year we’ve had a full complement of chairs at Blake, but I am already seeing a much more thoughtfully knit together curriculum in every discipline. Chairs are working with faculty at all levels to fill in gaps where they have been discovered, to eliminate redundancies and to coordinate areas of study where disciplinary connections can be made that develop themes and reinforce understanding.

In the Parent News piece I wrote in [March 2008](#), I discussed Blake’s curriculum in some depth and outlined our plan to map our curriculum across our three divisions. We have and will continue to work toward this goal with our cohort of PK–12 chairs at Blake leading the effort to regularly refine and strengthen our School’s 14-year course of study.

Thank You Blake Faculty and Staff!

As of January 2010, 92 percent of all Blake faculty and staff have



participated in the 2009–10 Annual Fund. This is the fourth consecutive year Blake employees have reached a participation level of 90 percent or higher. We are so very grateful for all that the Blake faculty and staff give to our School each and every day.

A special thank you to employee Annual Fund volunteers Michèle Cassavante, Steve Kaback, Laura Larson, Kamie Page and Shelly Pomonis.

Help us meet our parent participation goal of 100 percent by [giving online](#) now! It’s quick, easy and helps Blake — and the planet — save resources.

18th Annual Diversity Symposium with Dr. Carlos E. Cortés

**Tuesday, Feb. 23
7 p.m.**

**Upper School,
Juliet Nelson Auditorium**



Dr. Carlos E. Cortés will be the featured speaker at this year’s Blake Diversity Symposium on Tuesday, Feb. 23 at 7 p.m. in the Upper School’s Juliet Nelson Auditorium. An internationally recognized author, lecturer and consultant, Cortés will discuss “The Changing Face of America: Implications of Diversity for a 21st Century Education” and take audience questions following his talk. Seating is limited, so please arrive early.

Cortés is a widely published author of many books, articles, film and television documentaries and educational materials. He also is known for his work as the creative/cultural advisor for Nickelodeon’s Peabody award-winning children’s television series “Dora the Explorer” and its sequel, “Go, Diego, Go!,” for which he received the 2009 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Image Award. His recent books include “The Children Are Watching: How the Media Teach About Diversity” and “The Making — and Remaking — of a Multiculturalist.”

Additionally, Cortés is a professor emeritus of history at the University of California, Riverside and has served on the summer faculty of the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education since 1990. He is a consultant to government agencies, school systems, universities, the mass media, private businesses and other organizations. He holds five education degrees and has lectured widely throughout the United States, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Australia on the implications of diversity for education, government, private business and the mass media.

In addition to his public speaking event on Feb. 23, there will be opportunities for parents, faculty and students to meet with Cortés. For more information, visit Blake’s [web site](#) or contact Blake’s Director of Diversity [Donna Albro](#) at (952) 988-3717.

Blake Directory Update Sheet for 2009–10 Now Available

Recent changes to the 2009–10 Blake student directory are now available in an [update sheet](#). In order to have the most current contact information for fellow families, we highly recommend either printing out this directory update or reviewing and making the appropriate changes to your hard copy. Please remember the most up-to-date source of this information will always be the online directory on BlakeNet.

Cool Blake Programs for Hot Summer Months!

Thinking about summer plans? Think Blake School's Summer Programs 2010! Our spectacular assortment of academic, athletic, enrichment, specialty and recreational programs are sure to keep your family active this summer. Check out all these choices:



Enrichment



Specialty



Academics



Camp Acoma



Athletics

- **Camp Acoma:** Camp Acoma continues its 40-year tradition of providing engaging supervised activities with three options to choose from: Camp Acoma Cubs (ages 4–5), Bears (ages 6–11) and Acoma Leadership Camp (ages 12–15). Please note the new two-week Acoma session on our Highcroft campus.

NEW!
Acoma on the Highcroft campus.
For details, contact David Cole.

- **Academics:** Our selection of academic courses will challenge students who want to accelerate their learning or work more deeply within given subject areas. Included with the traditional math, study skills and sneak-peek offerings are an Upper School creative writing course and an honors pre-calculus course.
- **Athletics:** Explore our athletic camps! Our exceptional coaches will offer instruction for girls and boys in a number of sports. They include, but are not limited to, lacrosse, soccer, baseball, basketball, swimming, golf and archery.
- **Enrichment:** Blake's summer enrichment program provides learning in a fun and creative environment. Students may choose from theater, art, robotics, debate and chess. There are a number of opportunities to combine a morning activity with an afternoon program to create your child's own unique fun-filled experience. We also anticipate offering the course Comic Book Life and a scratch computer class on the Highcroft campus.
- **Specialty:** Students may continue to take advantage of courses created by the Science Museum and the Twin Cities Jazz Workshop, along with a new advanced-level art course taught by the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and string and music tutorials led by our experienced Blake faculty.

Online registration will begin on Friday, Feb. 5. Register early and take advantage of our Early Bird Special 10 percent off, which ends April 16. Do not delay! Space is limited. Questions? Please contact [David Cole](#) at (952) 988-3463.

Introducing New Summer Programs Director David Cole

For the past 11 years, David Cole has worked in the NHL with the Tampa Bay Lightning and Atlanta Thrashers as the director and manager of fan development, respectively. In those capacities, he was responsible for growing youth and adult amateur hockey participation through ice, inline, street and sled hockey instruction. The job also allowed him to coach the best girls and boys ice hockey players in Florida and across the United States at USA Hockey Select Festivals, the Chicago Showcase, the Team Florida girls' program, the Tampa Bay Lightning Hockey Camps and the David Cole Hockey Camps, where he served as the director. Cole's colleagues admire him for his strong work ethic and ability to be an ambassador for any program, as well for being a problem solver who does not limit himself in vision. He is a graduate of Williams College and is an accomplished drummer and painter. Cole and his wife, Janet, have a daughter who is a senior at Smith College.



David Cole

Responsible World Citizens Learn Through Service Learning

By Director of Service Learning Nan Peterson

The culture of service learning at Blake continues to grow! Students in all grade levels participate in community involvement projects that are woven into the curriculum of the classroom and beyond. Through service learning, students develop a better understanding of themselves and of their world and an awareness of the opportunity and responsibility they have to make the world a better place. It is our mission to engage our students in service learning so that they will develop lifelong habits of heart, mind and action and become responsible world citizens.

Service learning means meeting real needs of our local, national and international communities. In 2008–09, 95 percent of Lower School students participated in one or more service learning activities outside of school. All Lower School students participated in school community service activities connected to learning in the classroom, in art, in music, in physical education, and/or in theater. Lower School students currently have an on-going food collection. Many classes have studied issues of hunger in Minnesota. Parent Rob Zeaske, CEO of Second Harvest, visited classrooms to talk about food banks. First grade students made sandwiches for local shelters and wrote letters to children at an orphanage in Kenya. Others collected funds for UNICEF and learned how that money might help people. Our young students are taking community service to heart and several have hosted community service-themed birthday parties.

Our Middle School families have been equally active preparing and serving meals at Loaves and Fishes and participating in a fall community service day to learn what they can do to fight hunger and homelessness. Seventh and eighth grade students are participating in authentic service learning in English and science classes. An eighth grade service learning lesson plan by science teacher Lynne Macziewski was



Students in Jon Van Bergen's IA8 class with the xylophones they made and donated to a Minneapolis school.

selected by Youth Service America as one of 12 outstanding national middle school service learning experiences. (“Hazardous Chemicals? Not In My Water!” can be viewed at gotoservicelearning.org.) Students in Jon Van Bergen's art class made beautiful, pitch-perfect wooden xylophones and donated them to a Minneapolis school. Some Middle School students will again attend the Summer of Service Camp at Blake led by faculty member Judy-Ann Erlich.

Upper School students have a wide variety of service opportunities including after-school tutoring at neighborhood schools, making blankets and collecting clothing for homeless youth. This year Upper School students who register and complete 100-plus hours of service on their own will be eligible for an award similar to earning a varsity letter in a sport or club. Upper School homeroom classes sponsored families and gathered holiday gifts for them. Students in art teacher Bill Colburn's advanced drawing class again visited and made friends with adults with mental illness at Vail Place. These students drew portraits of the residents, who kept them as gifts. The rain garden, designed, installed and maintained by science teacher Dan Trockman and his environmental science students, continues to purify water run-off at the Upper School. Students in Max Delgado's and Rick Cawood's English classes will meet with elders from Copperfield Village to write down their histories.

Blake faculty members and employees continue to serve as excellent service learning mentors for our students. Thanks to service learning advisors Paula Huddy, Kris Nelson, Lisa Sackreiter, Carol Tombers, Jon Van Bergen, Janet Williams and Bob Zelle, to name just a few, for helping grow our culture of service learning!

In 2009, Nan Peterson received the Minnesota State Service Learning Passion Award and the National Pathfinders to Peace award on behalf of Blake.

faculty profile



John Hamre

By Virginia Burke

Whether in a warm classroom or cool ice arena, Upper School math teacher and head boys' varsity hockey coach John Hamre encourages students to pursue personal excellence and strive for over-achievement. At Blake, he enjoys working with “great faculty colleagues and motivated, aspiring students.” He wants math students to become “better problem solvers and consumers of data-driven information, to see mathematical patterns and behaviors in worldly phenomena, and to become stronger critical and independent thinkers.”

Before joining Blake in 2002, Hamre worked on several hockey-coaching staffs, including the Universities of Minnesota and Alaska-Anchorage, Princeton and Yale, the 1994 United States men's Olympic hockey team, and USA Hockey's National Team Development Program. Originally from Roseville, Minn., Hamre holds a doctorate in education, an M.B.A. and a bachelor's of mathematics degree from the University of Minnesota.

Hamre is extremely proud of his students, hockey team and the coaching staff at Blake. “It's all about team,” says Hamre. “It's about playing the game honestly, developing a strong work ethic, building character and giving one's best mental and physical efforts, regardless of ability level.” Inspired by his father and past coaches, Hamre stresses the importance of perseverance. Success for Hamre means seeing students and athletes pursuing individual excellence.

“He doesn't coach by the scoreboard,” says team captain Kasey Boyd '10. “He wants us to be the best we can be — as students, socially and, of course, as hockey players.” Current Minnesota Gopher Josh Birkholz '09 says, “It's all about passion for the game and respect with Coach Hamre. He cares for each player and is 100 percent supportive of positive life choices made both on and off the ice.”

Hamre's hopes for 2010? “To support our students' educational pursuits, to continue to play great team hockey until mid-afternoon on March 13, and then to play a lot of golf when the snow melts.”

We need your
donation items
for the auction!



Seeking volunteers
to help prepare for
the Classic. There
are many options.
Contact us today.

The Hollywood Classic Saturday, May 1, 2010 The Blake Ice Arena

"It's alive! It's alive!"

The Hollywood Classic web site, that is ...

Auction Donations Needed

Please lend us your help and support for this important event by donating auction items. The process is simple and quick — just log in, set up your account, and you are ready to go! You can donate auction items immediately, then in April, you can preview the available items and make a wish list in advance of the online auction's launch.

"Go ahead, make my day ... "

Log in and set up your account now by clicking [here](#) or by visiting the [Hollywood Classic](#) page on Blake's web site.

**And now, we bring you a commercial break about the Hollywood Classic ...
Fun facts you need to know about the different scenes in this exciting event.**

Fund-raising breaks all records at the Hollywood Classic!

We want to make this happen on May 1, 2010, right here in our own Blake Ice Arena. ("There's no place like home!") Join the community for an evening of cocktails, dinner, live auction and entertainment while raising money for our stars — our children. Invitations will be arriving in the mail after spring break. Reservations will be taken online only. Buy your tickets early as seating is limited, and this is sure to be a sellout.

Online auction showcases hundreds of must-have items!

With easy navigation and many terrific items available, you'll want to start the bidding right away. The online auction will open for bidding on Wednesday, April 21 and close on Friday, April 30.

BlakeStakes returns by popular demand!

"You've got to ask yourself one question: Do I feel lucky?" One of our most popular traditions is BlakeStakes, a raffle for one year of free tuition. Tickets will be sold in advance and the evening of the event. You do not need to be present to win.

Live Auction — "Show me the money!"

A dazzling array of fabulous items will be auctioned off live at the event. Here's a hint: "We'll always have Paris ... "

Fund in Need needs you!

Financial aid at Blake provides many students the financial means to attend our school. But there are numerous extra expenses for academic support, the arts, sports and other extra-curricular activities in which our children participate and from which they benefit. Fund in Need bridges these gaps. Examples of activities made possible to many students because of past contributions to the Classic Fund in Need include tutoring, AP exams, prom, Middle School Ski Day, after-school enrichment, Extended Day and Blake Summer Programs. Please consider making a pledge to this important cause.

Volunteer Opportunities

We are still looking for help in many areas of the Hollywood Classic including decorations, set up and tear down. To volunteer, please visit the [Hollywood Classic page](#) of the Blake web site or contact Co-Chairs Jane Mortell or Joy Solomon.

My Thousand Mile Commute

By Jim Short

As a Middle School dad, I sometimes wonder exactly how I got here, or more to the point, how my children got me here. With a daughter in seventh grade and sons in fifth and first, it often seems as though my wife and I exist merely to provide logistical support for our kids and their busy schedules. As an IT software consultant, I travel — a lot. But despite the emotional fatigue, cognitive stress and the physically draining nature of the plane-train-automobile ballet of my work life, I'm not spared the rapid-fire delivery of my wife's observations and home-front updates — interlaced with the occasional question that threatens to initiate a partial core melt-down of my brain: "Did I tell you how much the technical swimsuits cost?" "Did you know our Costco membership is up for renewal?" "Did you schedule the furnace appointment?" "What do you think about changing the furniture?" And oh yeah, "Did Ms. Johnson respond to your e-mail?"

Uh oh. It seems I completely forgot about Ms. Johnson. Our 6-year-old is "having issues" with another boy in class — a prepubescent bickering contest of major proportions. "You were a little boy once," my wife astutely points out. "What do you think we should do?"

Does she really want to know? When I was my son's age, disputes were resolved quickly and directly, without the supervision of adults and certainly without the benefit of a facilitated meeting. Positions were staked out and some words might be exchanged, all while the two combatants endured a brief period of glaring intimidation. In extreme cases, a little physicality was shared, but once all the baby testosterone had been burned off, the respective parties would fall back to neutral corners and regular playground activities would resume. But to suggest such an approach might be applicable today would surely not endear me to my wife or Ms. Johnson, who is certain that "with a little instructive direction, the boys can be friends."

I keep my childhood memories to myself and mumble something about following up with Ms. Johnson.

"Are we out of vanilla extract?" my wife asks. Why does she think I know? I struggle to formulate an acceptable response that won't place me in hot water, and the door bursts open. "Daddy's home! Daddy — Dad!" Our boys rush in at me from different angles — a loping defensive end and a blitzing linebacker. Trapped between the stove and center island, I have little room to maneuver outside the pocket and I am about to get sacked. I have been on the road for two weeks, and I've missed these little roughnecks dearly. Bracing for impact, I get a double-bear hug that immobilizes my waist and legs.

When I'm in town, I try to take over carpooling duties to give my wife a reprieve from the grind of shuttling kids, but today I am working from home, and I'm more anxious than usual about re-establishing contact with the paymaster. Sensing my panic, my wife offers to pick up our daughter from swim practice. I make a mad dash for my basement office where I boot up my laptop and discover that Wall Street hasn't collapsed without me. I breathe somewhat easier and fall into my work. About an hour passes and I go upstairs to check on the boys only to be momentarily and stupidly confused to see some lady walking in the house.

*I have been on the road for two weeks,
and I've missed these little roughnecks dearly.
Bracing for impact, I get a double-bear hug that
immobilizes my waist and legs.*



*She drops the bags ... rushing in for a tight hug.
My little pecan buries her face in my chest,
my heart swoons with affection.*

It's my daughter. No matter how old she gets I can't seem to shake the image of the little, 4-pound, 15-ounce newborn that once easily fit in the crook of my arm. But this person — with her requisite Ugg boots and Blake hoodie, Swiss Army knapsack and TYR swim bag — this is an entirely different somebody. The gold hoops in her ears are definitely not of the little girl variety, and she's wearing a worry-free smile that grows wider when she sees me. "Dad! I didn't know you were home!" She drops the bags (although the cell phone remains firmly in her grasp) rushing in for a tight hug. My little pecan buries her face in my chest, my heart swoons with affection. She starts talking a mile a minute. She's particularly animated this afternoon, providing in-depth background about her day. I notice my wife exit and re-enter through the garage, and I realize she's unloading bags from the car. I raise my eyebrows and get her attention, but she waves me off — a signal that permission has been granted for me to give our daughter some undivided attention. My daughter picks up steam. Somehow I manage to stay lucid enough to learn (or to be reminded) that she has qualified for sectionals in the 100-yard fly, her swim team will head to Noodles & Co. after practice tomorrow for a "sisterhood bonding/get psyched for competition" lunch, she is writing a paper on Queen Nefertiti and ancient Egypt, there are 10 new songs she would like to download, she did pretty well on her math quiz, and her Uggs really, really need to be cleaned.

Somewhere between her recount of noodles and Nefertiti, I slipped into a comfortable zone of acceptance. All around me, evidence of my incomplete projects abounds, but getting stressed won't do any good. Once again my work will have to wait. Maybe later tonight I'll sneak back down to the Bat Cave and play catch up on work, check off a couple of household chores on the hubby list, then reflect on my thousand mile commute and the reasons why I'll continue to do it for as long as it takes — four beneficiaries in particular who give special meaning to the unpredictability and controlled chaos that defines my world.

The Short family commutes to Blake Middle School from the town of Andover, Minn.

All-School

FACULTY DAY & PRESIDENTS' DAY

There will be no school on Friday, Feb. 12 and Monday, Feb. 15. The Extended Day program is not available on these days.


BREAKFAST AT BLAKE

The next Breakfast at Blake for alumni and parents will be held on Thursday, Feb. 18 in the Upper School's Cherne Forum from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. The speaker will be Blake parent Larkin McPhee.

DIVERSITY SYMPOSIUM

Blake's 18th annual Diversity Symposium is on Tuesday, Feb. 23 from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Juliet Nelson Auditorium of the Upper School. The speaker is Carlos Cortés. This event is free and open to the public. Seating is limited, so please arrive early.

February			March		
DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
2/2	Admissions Reenrollment Contracts Mailed Live@Blake	7-9 pm US	2/23	18th Annual Diversity Symposium with Carlos Cortés	7-9 pm JNA
2/9	Live@Blake	7-9 pm US		Live @ Blake	7-9 pm US
2/10	Student Services PK-12 Parent Group	7:30-8:30 am PCR	2/24	Student Services PK-12 Parent Group	8:45-10 am PCR
2/12	PK-12 No Classes (Faculty Professional Development Day)				
2/15	PK-12 No School (Presidents' Day Holiday)				
2/16	Live@Blake	7-9 pm US			
2/17	PK-12 Student Services Parent Workshop Ash Wednesday	11:30 am-1 pm Forum			
2/18	Breakfast at Blake (Larkin McPhee)	7:30-8:30 am Cherne	3/2	Live@Blake	7-9 pm US
2/19	Admissions Reenrollment Contracts Due		3/5	No Classes PK-12 (LS/MS/US Conferences)	



Breakfast at Blake

SPONSORED BY THE BLAKE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION


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, Feb. 11 to Sarah at (952) 988-3445 or advancementrsvp@blakeschool.org.

Speaker: Larkin McPhee
Blake Parent and Documentary Filmmaker
"Larry King, Suze Orman, the Gerhardts and Me"

Thursday, Feb. 18, 2010 7:30-8:30 a.m.
Upper School, Cherne Forum



Larkin McPhee is an award-winning director, producer and writer of documentary films. She is perhaps best known for her intimate, sensitive portrayals of people, such as in her critically acclaimed films "Depression: Out of the Shadows," a primetime PBS special on the illness of depression; "Dying To Be Thin," a "NOVA" special on eating disorders; and "Children By Design," part of the PBS series "Secret of Life" on the marvels and perils of the genetic revolution.

McPhee's other film and television projects include "Smithsonian World," "National Geographic Explorer," "Big Ideas," as well as a special about quintuplets for the Discovery Health Channel and a panel discussion on heart disease hosted by Larry King on PBS. She has received wide recognition for her work, including the prestigious Peabody, Emmy and CINE Golden Eagle Awards.

McPhee is a graduate of Middlebury College. She lives in Minneapolis with her husband and children, Tess '10, Dylan and Lucas '17.

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.

Lower School

WINTERFEST

The **Blake campus** Winterfest will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 2 from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m. in the Blake Ice Arena. Watch eFriday folders to register, and please contact Molly Cronin or Aimee Mairs for more information.

LOWER SCHOOL JOINT PARENT ASSOCIATION MEETING AND CURRICULUM NIGHT

A joint-campus Parent Association meeting will be held on Thursday, Feb. 4 from 6 to 9 p.m. on the Highcroft campus. Curriculum Night will follow the short meeting, during which time parents will have the opportunity to break into smaller groups to learn more about various aspects of the Lower School curriculum. Look for the detailed agenda and program in upcoming eFriday folders.

NATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN PARENT INVOLVEMENT DAY (NAAPID)

NAAPID is on Monday, Feb. 8. The Blake School will welcome Dr. Johnnetta Cole, past president of Spelman College, founder and board chair of the Johnnetta B. Cole Global Diversity and Inclusion Institute at Bennett College, and current director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art. Cole will be a guest speaker at the assemblies on both campuses.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TRANSITION NIGHT

On Thursday, Feb. 18 from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Bovey Chapel, Middle School Director Joe Seivold and Assistant Middle School Director Elizabeth Hastings will welcome parents of current fifth graders for a Middle School orientation. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about programs in the Middle School, meet some of the sixth grade teachers and ask questions. Watch eFriday folders for further information about this important meeting.

GRADES 3 & 4 PARENT PARTIES

Parent parties are a great way to become acquainted or reconnect with other parents in your child's grade. Please make a special effort to introduce yourself to parents who are new to Blake. Watch for invitations and details in your eFriday folders and please remember to R.S.V.P.

3rd/4th Grade, Blake campus: Saturday, Feb. 27, 5:30–7:30 p.m., Pillsbury Conference Room

3rd/4th Grade, Highcroft campus: Saturday, Feb. 27, 5:30–7:30 p.m., Highcroft lobby

LOWER SCHOOL CONFERENCES

There will be no school on Thursday, March 4 and Friday, March 5 to accommodate Lower

School conferences. On Thursday, conferences will be held from noon to 8 p.m., and on Friday conferences will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The library on each campus will be open for student drop off during individual conferences. The Extended Day program is available on both days and registration is required.

BINGO NIGHT: SAVE THE DATE

All Lower School students in grades three through five and adult guests (no siblings please) are invited to participate in Bingo Night, which will be held in the campus dining rooms. Dinner will be served followed by bingo and prizes. Watch your February eFriday folders for more information and to sign up.

Highcroft campus: Tuesday, March 16, 6–7:30 p.m.

Highcroft campus co-chairs: Melissa Johnson and Sharon Sund

Blake campus: Thursday, March 18, 6–7:30 p.m.

Blake campus co-chairs: Glen Bean and Julie Monahan

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

February			March		
DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
2/2	LSB Winterfest/Skating Party	3:30–4:15 BC Ice Arena	3/4	LS Conferences (No classes)	Noon–8 pm BC/HC
2/4	LS Joint Parent Association Mtg./ Curriculum Night	6–9 pm HC	3/5	LS Conferences (No classes)	9 am–3 pm BC/HC
2/8	National African American Parent Involvement Day (LS Assemblies)				
2/18	Gr. 5 Transition to Middle School Night	7–9 pm Bovey			
2/27	LSB Gr. 3 & 4 Parent Party	5:30–7:30 pm PCR			
	LSH Gr. 3 & 4 Parent Party	5:30–7:30 pm HC Lobby			

Socialize With Blake on the Web

Whether you're an avid Facebook user, a loyal Tweeter, a news enthusiast or are totally LinkedIn, Blake wants to meet you there! Check out the School's social media repertoire:



Become a fan of The Blake School on [Facebook](#)! Search for us under "The Blake School (MN)."



Follow us on Twitter at [LifeatBlake](#).



Subscribe to [alumni](#), [athletic](#), [arts](#) and other [School news](#) on Blake's web site via RSS feeds.



Join The Blake School Networking Group on [LinkedIn](#).

And be sure to bookmark The Blake School online at www.blakeschool.org!

Publications Reminder

Please keep in mind Blake's divisional publications — Parent Link, Bearometer as well as the weekly Friday folders — can be found on BlakeNet in the Publications section. We encourage all parents to make the time to review and print out pages of interest.

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 Middle School Parent Association meeting will be held on Friday, Feb. 5 from 8:45 to 10:15 a.m. in the Pillsbury Conference Room. The featured speaker will be Dr. Timothy P. Culbert, medical director of Integrative Medicine and Cultural Care at Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota. Please note that there is no March meeting.

GRADE 7 SCIENCE FAIR

Please join our seventh grade students for their science fair on Wednesday, Feb. 10 from 2 to 3 p.m. in the Blake dining room.

GRADE 8 PARENT ORIENTATION

There will be an orientation for parents of current eighth grade students on Monday, Feb. 8 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Upper School. This is a great opportunity for eighth grade parents to learn more about the Upper School. Parents will hear presentations focused on various aspects of the academic, athletic and arts programs, as well as the support systems in place at the Upper School. Current Upper School students will give tours of the building. An invitation with more information will be mailed soon.

SKI AND SNOWBOARD DAY

Middle School Ski and Snowboard Day will be on Friday, Feb. 12. This is a fun, optional, full-day event for any interested Middle School students. A flyer with additional information will be sent home with your child. Equipment rentals and lessons are also available. Please contact Jessica Roe with questions or to volunteer.

GRADE 6 DANCE LESSON

The final sixth grade dance lesson will take place on Friday, Feb. 19 from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Blake dining room. Any questions, please contact Joanne Patterson or Andrea Schemel.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CONFERENCES

Middle School conferences will be held on Thursday, March 4 from 5 to 8:30 p.m. and on Friday, March 5 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

GRADE 8 VISIT TO THE UPPER SCHOOL

Eighth grade students will visit the Upper School on Friday, March 12 to prepare for their transition to the Upper School.

*Donna Magarian, vice chair
Middle School Parent Association*

Middle School Musical: 'Quixote'



Middle School students rehearse for the musical comedy "Quixote."

Come see "Quixote" on Friday, Feb. 26 in the MacMillan Performing Arts Center. This musical comedy was inspired by Miguel de Cervantes' "Don Quixote de la Mancha." "Quixote" was written by Flip Kobler, Cindy Marcus and Dennis Poore and is a modern take on the dream-filled life of an eighth grade boy who has a vivid imagination. Alonzo Quijana is an outcast and a loner at La Mancha Jr/Sr High School in New Mexico. Like most outcasts, he is bullied and picked on. He dreams of a time filled with chivalrous knights who fight justice — a time when one man might change the course of tomorrow. When Alonzo's imagination takes over, he becomes Don Quixote de la Mancha, and he and two other former misfits, Sancho and Donna, set out on a Friday night to right all the wrongs in the world, or at least those in La Mancha, New Mexico. This Middle School production is a wonderful story full of delightful music for the whole family.

February			March		
DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
2/5	MS Parent Association Mtg.	8:45–10:15 am PCR	3/4	MS Conferences (No classes)	5–8:30 pm MS
2/8	Gr. 8 Parent Orientation Night	7–8:30 pm US	3/5	MS Conferences (No classes)	9 am–1 pm MS
2/10	Gr. 7 Science Fair	2–3 pm BDR			
2/12	MS Ski And Snowboard Day	Off Campus			
2/19	Gr. 6 Dance Lesson #3	7–9 pm BDR			
2/26	MS Musical	7:30–9:30 pm MPAC			

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.

Upper School

GRADES 9, 10 & 11 COFFEE WITH THE DEANS

Ninth Grade Dean Dion Crushshon will meet with parents on Thursday, Feb. 4 from 8 to 9 a.m. Tenth Grade Dean Jim Mahoney will host parents on Thursday, Feb. 11, also from 8 to 9 a.m. Eleventh Grade Dean Max Delgado will convene with parents on Tuesday, Feb. 16 from 8 to 9 a.m. All coffees will be held in the Cherne Forum. These informal events offer the chance to learn about and discuss grade-level topics of interest with the deans and other parents.

ACT TESTING

ACT testing will take place on Saturday, Feb. 6. Although testing will not be at Blake, all students registered for the test will be given a test center location.

SSAT TESTING

On Saturday, Feb. 6, SSAT testing will be held at 8 a.m. at the Upper School.

US PARENT ASSOCIATION MEETING

The Parent Association will meet on Monday, Feb. 8 in the Cherne Forum from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Upper School Director Marc Bogursky will give division updates. In addition, Colleen Bazzani, a sleep educator at the Methodist Hospital/Park Nicollet Clinic Sleep Disorder Center will be speaking about the sleep needs of teenagers. A light buffet lunch will be served at 11:15 a.m.

SNO DAZE DANCE

This year's Sno Daze dance will take place on Saturday, Feb. 20 from 8:30 to 11:30 p.m. at the Upper School.

SPRING CONFERENCES MARCH 4 & 5/ NO SCHOOL MARCH 5

Spring conferences will be held on Thursday, March 4 from 4 to 8 p.m. and Friday, March 5 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Upper School classes will be held on Thursday, but school will not be in

session Friday, March 5 to accommodate conferences. Students are encouraged to attend these meetings with their parents.

*Maureen Rudd, vice chair
Upper School Parent Association*

Upper School Musical "Seussical" March 12, 13 and 14 Mark your calendars!

February 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.

Fathers' Group discussion about the joys and challenges of parenting

Open to all fathers

Wednesday, Feb. 10, 7:30–8:30 a.m. — Pillsbury Conference Room, Blake campus

Book Discussion: "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success," by Carol Dweck

For parents of all grades

Wednesday, Feb. 17, 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m. — Cherne Forum, Northrop campus

Do you have a fixed amount of intelligence, or are you a work in progress? Do our students see themselves as invested in the learning process, or are grades a testament to their self-worth? "If I have to put forth a lot of effort in school, does that mean I am not as naturally smart as I thought I was?" Bring your growth mindset to the book and join us for a lively discussion that is likely to challenge how school and grades are viewed in relation to effort, intelligence and "success."

Support Group for Parents of children with learning differences/disabilities

For parents of all grades

Wednesday, Feb. 24, 8:45–10 a.m. — Pillsbury Conference Room, Blake campus

The discussion topic will be "Do I consent to medicate my child or not? What are the issues involved and what has been our collective experience?" All parents from the Blake community are invited to attend. Please contact Etta Barry if you have any questions.

February			March		
DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
2/4	Gr. 9 Coffee With The Dean	8–9 am Cherne	3/4	US Conferences	4–8 pm US
2/6	ACT	Off Campus	3/5	US Conferences (No Classes)	9 am–3 pm US
	SSAT	8 am–Noon US	3/6	SSAT	8 am–Noon US Library
2/8	US Parent Association Mtg.	11:15 am–1 pm Cherne			
2/11	Gr. 10 Coffee With The Dean	8–9 am Cherne			
2/16	Gr. 11 Coffee With The Dean	8–9 am Cherne			
2/20	US Sno Daze Dance	8:30–11:30 pm US			

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.

Contact the editor or parent representatives:
Editor, Ruth O'Neill (952) 541-4791, cincobill@aol.com;
Upper School, Maureen Rudd (612) 377-2552;
Middle School, Donna Magarian (612) 823-3219;
Lower School-Blake, Susan Hitchner Fluke (612) 929-2925;
Lower School-Highcroft, Aleya Champlin (952) 476-0258;
Parent Association President, Ellen Hoeg (612) 377-5102;
Blake Today, TBD; Calendar,
Joni Starr, Head of School's Office (952) 988-3405.

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.