



My families,

As I think about 2020 drawing to a close, my mind considered other types of endings. Based on my family's sports interests, I've had the opportunity to view many basketball games and races in Cross Country and Track. Here are two diametrically opposed ways of getting to an end. In basketball, if the score is close, the last few minutes can stretch into what seems like an eternity with the use of fouls...and once both teams reach double bonus...you need to settle in for a long battle and you can see who has been putting in the practice shots on the free-throw line. In Cross Country or Track, it doesn't matter if the leading runner is alone or if there are several battling for the lead in the last 100 meters, the race will be over as quickly as humanly possible. I observe that many of us are treating the end of 2020 as a basketball game and others like a race. What we must not lose in getting to the end are the lessons learned in the journey.

Winston Churchill said, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts." I believe Churchill cuts right to the quick for the end of 2020. Don't get me wrong, I'm ready for a very tumultuous year to be behind us, but the courage that each of you has shown throughout this year has been extraordinary and must not be forgotten. Another author who experienced great joy and great sorrow in her life was Anne Morrow Lindbergh, she exhorted, "It takes as much courage to have tried and failed as it does to have tried and succeeded." As we think back to any year in our lives, there are things that go well and those that do not...but what endures is your ability to continue, the will to not give up the courage to face the adversity.

It has been an honor to lead the school through a year of uncertainty, stress, and at times, conflict. Even though we look forward to closing out this year, I look forward to continuing the great work with my team and with you. As we focus on taking care of our community and delivering a great education and experience, we will continue to stand firm as our collective courage endures.

As we ease into our long winter break, I wanted to remind you of a couple items and make sure you are aware of a few others. Education is a very cyclical industry; various things happen once a year with great regularity and this year has certainly challenged this rhythm. As always, reach out if you have any questions or concerns about any of these.

- The first day back for students after the break is Wednesday, January 6th, 2021. I've received many questions about us going virtual when we return from the break. We would only go in that direction if the data within our Maclay community led us there. I've been proud and encouraged by the actions of those in our community, whose conscientiousness has kept our COVID numbers very low relative to other institutions. Let's continue to be responsible for each other and do our part to keep Maclay School doing well. I have some history in the Boy Scout ranks, so I'll encourage you to follow the motto that both the Girl and Boy Scouts share, "Be Prepared."
- This year has proven to be more active than others in the area of staffing, and as the picture of next year comes into focus, we are beginning our teacher/admin recruiting process for next year. We conduct national searches for all full-time positions and post all active searches on our [Careers Page](#). Due to the uncertainty of the delivery model next year, we are creating new pathways and programs for engaging future Maclay teachers. If you have connections with great educators in the region or across the globe, please encourage them to apply. The accessibility we have with our CVC model in the classroom opens many

possibilities for guest speakers and in some cases, guest instructors for a reach that is truly unmatched in our region.

- Over this past month, we have been working through Admissions events for students and families wanting to join us. I'm always stunned by the breadth and depth of the programs we offer and know, in our busy lives, it can be difficult to take it all in. We all have limited time, but I did want to offer the following links just in case you had not visited them in the past.
 - [Guidance Department](#)
 - [College Counseling](#)
 - [Maclay's Podcast Channel](#)
 - [Concurrent Virtual Classroom](#)
 - [Student Health & Safety](#)
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated their guidance and modified the options for length of quarantining for those identified as a close contact to a positive Covid-19 case. We will likely make this switch in the future, but I am uncomfortable doing so at this point. Therefore, no policies will change regarding the quarantine duration upon returning from our Winter Break in January. We will continue to monitor our Maclay community, and when it is time to adjust our procedures, we will do so and communicate those changes with you.
- Lastly, and just for fun, we did not want the year to end without our annual holiday video. COVID placed some restrictions on our production, but we could not let this tradition end. You will receive this year's version over the break, but if you are looking for something silly to distract the kids over the next couple of weeks, [here](#) are our previous attempts at having some fun while Rowdy and I are lonely on campus without anyone around 😊.

I also wanted to praise the Maclay Community for their thoughtful and contentious care of each other in the middle of this pandemic. At our highest levels, our positivity rate was one-half of one percent, and everyone's quick action, and transparency has kept our community amazingly healthy. We are far from out of the woods on this one, but as long as we continue to be diligent and responsible for our school community, we can finish this year even better than we started it.

I leave you with my congratulations for enduring a very hard year. Your children have truly been the fuel we needed to keep the school year going as well as it has. As we close the first half of the year and look ahead with hope and anticipation, I remind us all that there will be struggles ahead, I can guarantee this. But Mark Twain said it well, "Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of it." Together, courageously, we continue.

Onward,

James



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