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Blake Blue Note  
May 2009

May is always the busiest month in a high school but it is always especially hopping at Blake. May is also the month of events including the spring musical Oklahoma, athletics, instrumental, choral and dance concerts, HSA and AP exams, "Race for the Dream," Academic Awards Night, Athletic Awards Night, and of course the Prom and After Prom. (In May, I wish I had a couch in my office as it's hardly worth going home until graduation!)

A record number of our students will once again take Advanced Placement exams the first two weeks in May. Specific schedules will be given to students by their teachers. We continue to be fortunate in being able to use the Peoples Community Baptist Church, just up Norwood Road, as our off-site testing center. High School Assessments will be administered the week of May XX (with make-ups the following week) to students enrolled in Algebra, Biology, English 10, and NSL Government. Students not involved in testing may arrive to school on a special delayed opening schedule outlined in this issue of the Blue Note. Additional information will be sent home with students. HSA testing is a graduation requirement for students beginning with this year's graduating class. Teachers work very hard to prepare Blake students and they have consistently done extremely well on the HSA's.

During the week of Prom, May 4 through 8, SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) has planned a series of events including an assembly on safe driving and decision-making as a way to help our students prior to the prom. SADD hoping all students will sign the "Prom Promise" to remain drug and alcohol-free and specifically to make good decisions on prom night to keep everyone safe.

The Junior/Senior Prom is set for May 8, 2009 at the Samuel Riggs Alumni Center at the University of Maryland. (I attend many events there; it is a beautiful setting for the prom.) The parent-sponsored After-Prom celebration, immediately following the prom is once again at Dave and Buster's at White Flint Mall. This is a very special evening for students and a critically important time to remind them to be safe and smart. We have been very fortunate the past eight years that the majority of our students acted responsibly and we have not had to face the potential tragedies that prom night can bring. This is a night when I sleep very little, hoping that my phone does not ring with the kind of news we all dread. Blake staff consistently reinforces responsible decision making to students, but students need to be reminded that they are not invincible, that drinking and use of other illegal substances don't mix with driving. As a reminder, any student who shows up at the prom under the influence or with alcohol or drugs in their limo or car will have their parents called to pick them up and they will not be admitted to After-Prom under any circumstances, in addition to additional school-related consequences. I strongly suggest parents talk to their children about a Plan B, if their children's peers decide to drink. A phone call to come get a child is preferable than the ramifications of guilt by association. I do not believe in "group guilt" but prom night is not a night where I have

the luxury of time for complete investigations and time-consuming decision-making. It should be abundantly clear to students that alcohol infractions of any kind will be dealt with severely. We look forward to a festive, exciting culmination to the school year, unblemished by senseless issues or worse yet, tragedy. Our students know they will be greeted as they arrive at prom with the "hug and sniff" test. If there is a question, we will have police presence with a breath-a-lizer to ensure an alcohol and drug free prom and after-prom festivities.

The spring sports season is an extremely successful one; the large number of students participating in sports and supporting each other is outstanding. This investment of time and energy has positive payoffs for student athletes in teambuilding, camaraderie, skill development and most importantly good sportsmanship. I hope parents and students alike will continue come cheer on our student athletes.

Graduation is Wednesday, June 10, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. at DAR Constitution Hall. It seems far off now but is actually right around the corner. Please note that no one will be admitted to graduation without a ticket, (except for graduates.) This is a strict policy of DAR Constitution Hall. Graduates do not need a ticket; their cap and gown is their admission into DAR. Graduating seniors will be given an allotment of tickets and parents of seniors may request additional tickets through the system class sponsor Ms. Garlick and Mr. Heller outlined at the Senior Parent Meeting on March X. (Packets were sent home to parents of seniors who did not attend this meeting.) Parents with questions about graduation need to contact Ms. Garlick either by calling the school or by email. Classes will not meet on June 10 as Blake staff participates in the graduation ceremony. Students, who are not attending the graduation, are advised to use this time to study for final exams.

High school graduation is a joyous, but serious event, where appropriate behaviors are expected. Guests need to be reminded that the type of behavior that is appropriate at a sporting event is not appropriate at a graduation. One of the most frustrating things for any parent is to miss hearing their child's name read because the family and friends of another student are making so much noise that the student's name is obliterated. We want to celebrate the success of all of our graduates. Please help us work together to ensure that Blake High School's seventh graduation is a classy, appropriate and wonderful day for all of our graduates, their families and friends. The years Dr. Weast, our superintendent, has attended, he remarked to me that our graduations were among the very best in MCPS. I have every intention of keeping up this streak and sending off the Class of 2009 with the joyous fanfare they have earned and deserve.

As our seniors gear up for their final months at Blake, we have been delighted by the number of college acceptances to outstanding schools, and most importantly to the students' first choice colleges and universities. There is a great deal of excitement, tempered by some inevitable disappointments, but for the most part we are so pleased that the preparation of our students by their teachers, coupled with students' hard work is paying off. If past history is a good indication, our returning alumni tell us they felt well

prepared for college so we expect nothing but glowing reports when the Class of 2009 comes back in future years to report their progress.