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Principal's Holiday Letter

December 2017

Dear Davis Families,

This is always quite the busy time of the year in an elementary school! Our kids are quickly gearing up for vacation, but keeping engaged with their learning, as we are sure enough settled and in the thick of our year's work right now.

Most of our parent-teacher conferences have finished up over the last week. It has been a pleasure seeing many of you visiting the school and your child's classrooms recently for what was probably, for most, your longest conversation to date with your teacher(s). Although we've gotten to know your child so well over the first 70-ish days, it's impossible to capture all of our thoughts and wonderings in such a short conversation. These conferences provide a more formal opportunity for us to check-in as part of a longer, ongoing dialogue as part of our shared partnership.

But, really, that's what it is...a partnership. For many of us, as parents, our children spend more time with the adults at school than with us at home during the week. It's simple, yet difficult to conceptualize. However, that idea only further embeds our need to be partners. You're the expert on your child. Our teachers have expertise in their grades, content and disciplines. It's at this intersection that this collaborative process is so important. And it's ongoing because – and I promise you – our teachers don't just think about your child during those twenty-or-so conference minutes and during the class day. They think about your children on the drive in to school or on the way home. They think about your child on the weekends. Anyone who knows a teacher well enough knows they wake up at random hours of the night with thoughts, worries, wonderings – it might be the child that's struggling to engage with others at recess or a student fighting the daily battle to grow as a reader. Or, perhaps it might just be one of our young friends having an under-the-weather day. Whatever it is, teachers carry it with them everywhere and all of the time. As we've stated many times amongst our staff – this is the beauty of elementary school. We are in unprecedented positions to get to know your children more personally and closely than many will ever be able to due to the more intimate nature of our setting.

We love your children. We value your partnership. We ask that you continue to engage with us as part of an ongoing dialogue as the year progresses. If our professional or school terminology gets confusing, let us know! Something not making sense? Ask us! Your feedback is powerful and provides us windows into ideas for future parent workshops and other outreach.

We've continued to work with our PTA to engage families with more parent sessions this Fall and into this coming year. We've had wonderful workshops, ran by teachers, on a range of topics – including strategies for reading with your children to navigating anxiety in young kids to mindfulness techniques in school and at home. We recently sent a dozen parents to Teacher's College at Columbia University with our professional development partners for a special day of learning on reading, writing, and engagement techniques, as well as providing a further window into the exciting work happening during our literacy blocks.

We're excited for the year ahead! Davis is an amazing place for a young child, but we will never stop raising the bar. This winter/spring, our staff will be diving deeper into new content standards and taking big steps towards enhancing our social studies and science curriculum. In partnership with our new Technology

Director, we are taking next steps to leveraging the technological resources we have at our disposal and find them a home in our everyday curriculum. Combining with an enrichment of our content area curriculum, we want need to provide our children more opportunities to create, innovate, ask questions and problem-solve in real-world contexts.

We are always working to best update our families on 'what's new' at Davis at our PTA meetings. The next one is **Tuesday, January 9th** in the evening. We'll also be joined that night by our Assistant Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Parvey, as a special guest speaker. Come out to join us!

In acknowledging how much we value your partnership and our thankfulness for being a part of our community, I'm also remiss not to give one last shout-out to our amazing staff. No matter which curricular or specialized programs we may adopt, our greatest asset will always be our teachers. The work is never easy and there are always places to grow. We set our bar high. But, that's the challenge. And it's the challenge that drives so many of our teachers each day and draws them to a profession in which no day is ever like any other. It's exciting work and we continue to be inspired by your children.

It's important during this time of year to reiterate how grateful Ms. Marinaro and I are to be a part of this community. Like I said, we are all so busy and often spinning in every direction, but it's really important that we all slow down and say 'Thank you!' (And, it's a good lesson for our kids to see, too)

Thank you for your partnership. Thank you for your love, the engagement, and for the inspiration you provide to us each day. Here's to a special 2018!

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¡Nuestra traducción al español de esta carta familiar seguirá en breve! :)