



igniting your purpose!

August 29, 2019

Dear Parents & Guardians,

The final days of summer are certainly bittersweet. For the staff and faculty of Spark, the first day of school is something that we've been looking forward to for a very long time. For students, the start of the school year means the end of summer vacation and, we hope, an exciting new chapter in their lives.

We've truly enjoyed greeting all of you in our one-on-one meetings and are grateful to have had the chance to have done so before that first day. From the feedback that I have received from many of you, our Spark Family Cookout seems to have been a welcomed opportunity for you to meet each other and begin attaching names with faces.

After meeting all of you and having seen the caring way in which you have all interacted at the cookout, we know that the Spark Community is a very special one. The nature of a high school experience that is of any real value is to challenge our students, and while the nature of that challenge certainly does bring a level of stress to our students, we know that as a community, we can meet, discuss, listen, and move to pathways toward success as we work together to help our students grow to their utmost.

In that vein, I want to tell all of you that I have listened to the feedback that I received after last week's newsletter wherein I asked for your perspective on forming our cohorts. I had mentioned that my perspective has been to assign cohorts through a random process to support the cohorts' ability to introduce Spark students to workgroups as is the case in the career world. Some of you have noted that entering a "brick and mortar" high school is a very new experience for some of our students and that the idea of random cohorts may be a great deal to adjust to. I think that is a very valid point and will allow out students to decide whether they wish to be grouped with students whom they already know or if they wish to be placed randomly into their cohort — FOR THE FIRST SEMESTER.

At the end of the first semester, the faculty and I will review the cohorts and may choose to change them, either by assigning students directly to a new cohort blend or through a simply random process. I think this approach will accomplish both the desire to be sensitive to our students' needs while maximizing the advantages of the cohort model.

Please review opening day details in last week's newsletter. We are planning a day that provides time to begin adjusting to a new school environment while getting to know each other. We will have temporary signs on the campus to direct you to the entrance at the rear of the college that we will be using for Spark, but the simple directions are to take your first right on the campus, followed by two left turns. The college would like to observe bus movement in our parking area before painting "bus lane" signs. We will be at the door at the start and end of the school day, not only to guide Spark students and help to get into a safe routine, but to say "hello" and continue affirming the community we wish to be.

I will ask your patience with respect to the software we are implementing for online communication with our families. We have a great package with loads of capacity; however, I can guarantee that the process of implementing the software will include a good deal of “squeaking” as we work to focus displays, templates, etc. In the first days of school, we will be setting up both parents/guardians and students with accounts to access class information, grades, reports, and much more. Having implemented similar programs before, I promise you that we will be chasing down bugs for a while. Please remember that you can always reach us by calling us and/or can reach me at denismailloux@sparkacademynh.org.

Each student should either bring their own graph-ruled notebooks (4) and 4 color pen on the first day of school or bring \$8 to purchase these from us.

Also, they should bring they lunch and completed forms as listed in the email that preceded this newsletter. We were able to include several of these forms in your initial application materials, but we do need these additional ones as well. Once again please note the students will be bringing home a few more forms in the first few days of school, such as a books, materials and equipment use agreement, and a lab/technology safety form.

We look forward to seeing you on the 4th!

Denis Mailloux
Director

