Greetings from the Interim Head of School

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

Intellectual Habits of Mind

One of the primary underpinnings of MacDuffie’s mission is to instill “intellectual habits of mind.” We often mention this in conversation but seldom give it substance. Two items have caught my attention recently relating to this. One was a New York Times article titled “If it Feels Good”, authored by David Brooks. In the article Brooks reports on research conducted by Christian Smith on young adults. The research in this study reveals that young adults see moral choices as a matter of individual taste or moral relativism. The article goes on to suggest that the cause of this may be “the erosion of shared moral frameworks” in the lives of 18 to 23 year olds.

The second item that caught my attention was a PBS documentary on the television show, Jeopardy, where programmers described how they “taught” a large computer to play Jeopardy and win. This computer not only had a large database of facts, but could also learn from both its own mistakes and also the correct responses of its human competitors. When it failed to identify the month that a particular event occurred, it learned from its competitors that this category required the answer to be a month and quickly narrowed its possible answers to the months of the year. Interestingly enough, the human competitors knew at the outset that the answer would be one of the months of the year.

So what does this have to do with intellectual habits of mind? Here at MacDuffie, our goal is to teach students not to parrot back information or to speak from emotion, but how to think. In speaking with many of our international students, they express the hope that their MacDuffie education will go beyond the skill of memorizing facts and procedures. Many have taken science courses in their homelands where science is taught without the benefit of laboratory experiences, and where classes are so large that no meaningful exchange of ideas is possible among students.

We teach our students to develop a strong point of view when viewing factual information, and we want them to see opposing points of views and then to understand the complexity of those views. This is very evident in our humanities and science classes. Peace Studies, Current Events, Modern European History and U.S. History are hotbeds for discussions focusing on opposing points of view.

We teach our students to communicate clearly in both writing and presentation. Insistence on proper citations, symbolism, and clarity helps students to become effective communicators. It’s not okay to include misspellings, poor grammatical structures, and vague references at MacDuffie. Our students write for an audience other than themselves.
We teach our students to weigh the evidence, choose legitimate sources of evidence, and refute opposing evidence in their writing. Students experience firsthand how cultural differences affect points of view. Synthesis and analysis of information along with cultural understanding are crucial skills under the umbrella of “intellectual habits of mind”.

We teach our students to question the relevance of what they are learning and to understand the interconnectedness of knowledge. Much time is spent individually and collectively by teachers to integrate the curriculum in a way that the boundaries of subject matters are boundaries necessary for classification and not intellectual boundaries. A student came up to me this week disappointed that his acting class required homework. When I questioned him more, he related how he was required to understand theater in a much broader way then he had expected. I told him that this was part of our mission summed up by “intellectual habits of mind”.

We teach our students to present information in a logical and convincing way. No more is this true than in our geometry classes where organizing and completing proofs is set side by side with the five-paragraph essay. Both these educational tools force students to organize, prioritize and present a point of view by coupling facts with logical, sequential thinking.

Lastly, and perhaps the most difficult, is the task of directing our students toward doing their own original work. Original work is a given in the art classroom, but a difficult task in many others. By nudging our students in the ways described above, we graduate students with their own individual styles of problem-solving, writing, and expressing themselves. Our students have the confidence to put themselves out there, take intellectual and performance based risks, and to share their talents with others.

A MacDuffie education stomps out moral relativism by engaging students in thoughtful discussions in small class settings with teachers and staff committed to fully educating each student. Our school community is the shared moral framework upon which we develop intellectual habits of mind. Our students truly become global citizens who will make a difference in the world.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Addicks
Interim Head of School
Building a Great School, One “Raving Fan” at a Time
Steve Griffin, Management Consultant

After spending a busy summer getting ready for the school year, it has been gratifying to see the students using our wonderful building. The student lounge has become a hub of student social activity, and the library has become a busy place for quiet activity. The computer lab, surrounded by classrooms, is a destination for industrious students, and the dining hall is a true community experience.

Over the next few months, students will also see some enhancements and upgrades as we grow into our space.
- New library furniture is being ordered.
- Construction on four new tennis courts and an outdoor basketball court with six baskets is slated to begin next week.
- The sprung floor for our dance studio is being delivered next week.
- Vending machines have been added to the student lounge, and further enhancements are forthcoming.

I have witnessed our sports teams in action on the fields and the court, and I have even gone for a run with the Cross Country team! I’ve been able to stop by some classes in progress, and I’ve also had a chance to teach a course myself. I’ve observed faculty meetings, whole school meetings, and class meetings. I’ve seen boarders in casual circumstances, and in organized activities, and I’ve been able to meet a number of parents of day students. Based on my experience (limited in time, but I can assure you it’s been a full immersion experience!), I have found MacDuffie students have demonstrated a spirit of self-advocacy, a willingness to pitch in, a respect for diversity, and a true love of learning. They are well-mannered, respectful, and enthusiastic.

I’ve been using the term “Raving Fans” a lot here at the School. Ken Blanchard wrote a book of that title, with the premise that “satisfied customers” are the enemy of improvement. We don’t simply want “satisfied customers” at The MacDuffie School: we want Raving Fans:
- parents who tell other parents “if there is one gift you can give your child, it's a MacDuffie education”;
- students who acknowledge that the MacDuffie experience changed their lives in ways they can’t yet imagine;
- teachers who are so passionate about who we are and what we do that it permeates everything they do.

For us to have a school of raving fans, we need your help. It is not enough for you to be simply satisfied. If you do not currently count yourself as a raving fan, ask yourself “Why not?”, and let us know early and often. Change is a messy process, so some things may not be as we hope them to be due to the transition. Be assured that we’re working hard to make the MacDuffie experience a superlative one for our entire community, and that your input is appreciated.

One of the major challenges we face in the months and years ahead is to grow and expand our programs, while maintaining the close-knit spirit of “The MacDuffie Way” that so many have come to know and love. The ability to make this transition will depend upon our ability to enunciate “The MacDuffie Way” to anyone and everyone who will listen. I look forward to speaking with all members of our community in the coming months, to hear their impressions of “The MacDuffie Way”. If you have any anecdotes that you think embody your concept of “The MacDuffie Way”, please send them along. In the meantime, I’ll continue looking, listening, learning names, and thinking of other ways to create Raving Fans.
Interim Head of School, Tom Addicks, and the Faculty and Staff of The MacDuffie School cordially invite all Parents and Guardians to

Back-to-School Night
Thursday, September 22, 2011
6:00 – 9:00 pm

Meet your child’s or children’s advisors.
Meet the faculty and staff.
Learn about MacDuffie, your student’s daily routine and ways for parents and guardians to join in a partnership with MacDuffie to ensure your student’s success!
Parents/Guardians – Reminders
from the Registrar, Pat Boudreau

Address/phone/email changes: Please notify the Registrar, Pat Boudreau, of any changes in address, telephone numbers (home, work, cell or emergency), and email address by calling (413) 467-1601, ext. 217 or email your change(s) to pboudreau@macduffie.org.

MacDuffie School Vacation Dates 2011-2012:
Parents, guardians and students should take care to avoid making any arrangements that conflict with the following dates. It is very important that all students attend classes on all school days, and be present at both Academic Convocation and Commencement.

- **Please Note:** In the event of an unforeseen need to be absent, approval must be obtained from the Assistant Head and by completing a Planned Absence form (obtain from the Registrar’s Office) four days prior to the absence. **Please Note for Boarding Students:** Students must leave campus for the Thanksgiving break and the December, March and summer vacations. The School is closed during these times. It is imperative that students attend all of their academic classes. Unexcused absences may have academic consequences.

**Thanksgiving:** Students may depart **AFTER 3:30 pm** on Tuesday, November 22, 2011. School resumes at 8:00 am Monday, November 28, 2011.

**December Vacation:** Students may depart **AFTER 3:30 pm** on Friday, December 16, 2011. School resumes at 8:00 am on Tuesday, January 3, 2012.

**March Vacation:** Students may depart **AFTER 3:30 pm** on Friday, March 9, 2012. School resumes at 8:00 am Monday, March 26, 2012.

**Summer Vacation:** Students may depart **AFTER Commencement** on Sunday, June 10, 2012.

**Work Permit Guide:** MacDuffie students between the ages of 14 and 17 years old who would like to obtain a work permit must follow the steps below:

- **Must have a job offer from an employer.**
- **Download a work permit application** from the Massachusetts Division of Occupational Safety’s website ([www.mass.gov/dos/youth](http://www.mass.gov/dos/youth)) or pick-up an application at the Superintendent of Schools’ Office/School Department where the student lives.
- **Bring the application to the employer and have him/her complete the section, “Promise of Employment”**.
- **If 14 or 15, the student’s doctor must complete the Physician’s Certificate of Health section.**
  - **Note:** The Certificate of Health must be signed within the previous 12 months of the date the application is submitted for a work permit.
- **A parent, guardian, or custodian and the student must sign the completed work permit application.**
- **Take the completed application and proof of student’s age (e.g., birth certificate, passport, or immigration record) to the Superintendent of Schools’ Office/School Department in the school district where the student lives.**

Please note that the work permit will **only** allow the student to work in Massachusetts. Each time a student begins a new job, he or she will need to apply for a new work permit.

For more information, please call the local School Department.

Pat Boudreau, Registrar
Welcome back! The Mustangs are already in action, having begun games the week of September 12. The Athletics Department is pleased to welcome the return of Meirion George as Head Coach of the Boys’ Varsity Soccer team, Bob Marvel as Head Coach of the Girls’ Varsity Soccer team, and Rick Plaut as Head Coach of the Girls’ Varsity Volleyball team. We are excited that Zach Taylor (MacDuffie Spanish teacher) is coaching the Varsity Cross Country team, and Peter Shelburne (MacDuffie math teacher) is heading the JV soccer program this fall.

All athletic contests will take place on the new MacDuffie campus. Our volleyball team will be in action in our gym, while Cross Country will be running on a course around school, and all three soccer teams will play on the adjacent campus fields. Our home game schedule is posted on the school calendar. Please come out and support the Mustangs!

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New faces to meet and old friends to greet! Over 200 MacDuffie students and their families joined faculty and administrators for our first ever Ice Cream Social at the new Granby campus. New and returning students were all smiles as they connected with their Big and Little Brothers and Sisters, chatted with faculty and ate yummy ice cream sundaes provided by Sage Dining Services.

The lawn in front of the Gymnasium resembled the United Nations as international students from 16 countries (Burma, Brazil, China, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam) joined together with U.S. students from 29 Massachusetts and Connecticut cities and towns, as well as from Maine, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey.

Many thanks to all the returning Big Brothers and Sisters and their families who did such a great job welcoming our 97 new MacDuffie students!
The MacDuffie School Parents' Association

Please join us for the Parents' Association Meeting on Thursday, September 29th at 5 pm

Location: Room 209 (Enter main entrance to hallway, turn right, 1st room on left)

Our agenda will include:
- Class Parent Representatives, Treasurer, and Secretary positions.
- We'd like to look at the year ahead in terms of events and fund raising.

We hope you can be there! Steve Griffin will also be joining us. See you then!

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Your input is important, so we'd love to hear from you! Please take a few minutes to complete this survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3W5VQ83. Thanks!

Martha deHahn & Nina Metz, Co-Chairs

IT'S BACK!

The MacDuffie Arts Department Fund Raiser: CHOCOLATE
A Family Event Focused on Chocolate & Valentine’s Day

Sunday, February 12, 2012, 3 to 5 pm

Tables of Chocolate Desserts
Live Music
Gift Basket Raffles

Looking for arts-loving people who would like to help:
- Bakers (chocolate, of course, as the main ingredient!)
- Shoppers and Persuaders (contacting local shops and persuading them to donate items for gift baskets)
- Crafters (making accessories for the festival and putting gift baskets together)
- Decorators (getting the place ready)
- Set Strikers (cleaning up after the event)

If you would like to help the MacDuffie Arts Department, Please email Jo-Ann Hastings, Visual Art Teacher at MacDuffie jhastings@macduffie.org
The boarding department has gotten off to a busy start. Our new boarding students began arriving on Monday, August 29th followed by returning boarders the next day. After spending time unpacking, settling in, meeting roommates, suitemates, hallmates, new Residential Advisors, and greeting old and new friends, the boarders embarked on a busy round of orientation activities.

There were trips to Holyoke Mall to purchase necessities and forgotten items and a walk across the sports fields to Cindy’s (the nearby ice cream and hamburger snack shop). Our annual Ice Cream Social was also held, where new and returning boarders and day students had an opportunity to mix and mingle with each other and their teachers.

Continued. . .
Mixed in with trips to the Eric Carle Museum and the New England Air Museum were placement tests for English and math for new international students, as well as sessions for opening MacDuffie computer accounts and learning about our required laundry service. Registration was next, where boarders turned in all their forms, received their schedules and ordered their textbooks.

The ninth graders enjoyed a class party at Olivia Smith’s house, and everyone went roller skating and also to see the Broadway musical play “Wicked” in Hartford. On Sunday of Labor Day weekend, the boarders spent the day on campus working with group leaders from “Adventure In, Adventure Out” going through some icebreakers and “getting to know you” activities, along with some team building and leadership development exercises. If anyone had any energy left, there were optional trips to the movies, additional shopping trips, open gym and frisbee on the fields.

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Now that classes are underway, the regular rhythm of life at MacDuffie has begun. What a joy it is to be in this beautiful new environment making lots of new friends and renewing old friendships!
Naviance
The MacDuffie School utilizes Naviance, the premier college search database used by many high schools across the country. Beginning in their junior year, students are given access to this database in order to help them research and start organizing a list of potential colleges that they may apply to as seniors. The program allows students to access information such as location, population, majors, and admission statistics on the thousands of colleges and universities across the United States. Through various charts and scattergrams, students are also able to get an idea of where they may stand in a college’s applicant pool as far as Grade Point Average (GPA) and standardized test scores.

Naviance works best as a communication tool between students and the College Counselor, and each student is responsible for keeping his or her account updated. This is particularly essential during senior year with impending college application deadlines. The program also allows students to keep track of their college application deadlines and provides a checklist of all submitted materials. Additionally, Naviance integrates quite well with the Common Application and allows the College Counselor to electronically send transcripts and letters of recommendation to most colleges and universities.

Sophomores and Juniors – PSAT: Saturday, October 15, 2011
The PSAT is a standardized test that gives 10th and 11th grade students first hand practice for the SAT. The exam will be given at MacDuffie in the Gym on Saturday, October 15 at 8:00 a.m. Students must arrive by 7:45 AM to check in, and testing will conclude around 11:15 AM. All 10th and 11th grade MacDuffie students are required to take the exam at this time. **The cost is $20 and is due no later than October 3rd.** Checks should be made payable to *The MacDuffie School* and given to Ms. Boudreau in the Guidance Office.

**Fall 2011 SAT I & SAT II Exam Dates**

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*Register online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)*

**Fall 2011 ACT Exam Dates**

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*Register online at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)*
Transportation News: The MacDuffie Bus Shuttle
Meirion George, Dean of Students

The MacDuffie School bus shuttle operates daily between Springfield and the MacDuffie campus in Granby. The pick-up and drop-off location is in front of The Republican newspaper building at 1860 Main Street in Springfield. Our bus is operated by King Ward Coach Lines and has a “MacDuffie” sign in the window.

- The daily morning departure from Springfield is at 7:15 am.
- Afternoon departure times from Granby are as follows:
  
  Monday, Tuesday, Thursday – 5:30 pm
  Wednesday – 1:30 pm
  Friday – 3:15 pm

During special events at the School (Mountain Day, etc.), you will receive notification of any changes to this service.

If you are interested in learning more about this service, or if you have a question concerning the bus shuttle, please contact Meirion George at (413) 467-1601, ext 229, or at mgeorge@macduffie.org.

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CAR-POOL    CAR-POOL    CAR-POOL    CAR-POOL

We have many parents in several communities who are interested in sharing rides to and from school. If you are interested in car pooling, please contact Ann Rivers at (413) 467-1601, ext 208, or at arivers@macduffie.org, and she will send you a contact list of people in your area.

PARKING: DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

Car pools should drop-off/collect students in the North Parking Lot at the front of the School. Drivers should exercise extreme caution while on the campus (campus speed limit: 10 mph). Parking is permitted only in the parking areas clearly marked at the front of the School building. In order to conserve energy and reduce air pollution, we ask that cars do not idle when waiting outside the School for students.

Juniors and seniors who drive themselves to School must register their vehicles with the Dean of Students and park in designated parking spaces. All drivers should drive with extreme awareness of pedestrians, especially of other students. Juniors who drive to School may not return to their vehicles or the parking lot until they are leaving for the day. Driving to School and parking a car on campus are a privilege, not a right. Students who violate the speed limit or other safety practices may have this privilege suspended or revoked. (Note: Boarding students may not operate a vehicle while attending MacDuffie.)

Please refer to the map on the following page for details on parking and drop-off/pick-up.