



Greetings from Head of School Penny B. Evins on the 1st day of school!

Greetings and welcome to the 2013-2014 school year. The last time I was in this space was shortly after accepting the role of Head of St. Paul's School for Girls. I was able to sit beside the sitting head, Mrs. Lohr, and enjoy the role of audience member.

On that occasion, I listened to your words and joined in to the songs and reflections of our community. Today, I have the pleasure and privilege of starting off our year with you.

You may wonder if I have butterflies in my stomach because I am new. Many of us in this room are new, yes? I ask that we welcome you with a round of applause, returning ladies and faculty, please join me.

We are so pleased to have you here with us. Your ideas, participation and questions will help us to become even better. A community such as ours is one which is reenergized and renewed when the old and new come together and collaborate. Let me give some context to my Prayers talk to you.

I like to listen. Through listening to kids, children, and students, I find truth, sensibility, creativity, and joy. My family moved, in late June, from New Orleans, where we were all deeply involved in a Lower School Community. About 450 students and 80 adults in that LS community had much to say to me; I am hoping that you will too.

Before I begin listening to you, I wanted to share with you what they told me. I think of this as my moving to Baltimore, Head of School Instruction Manual. I have taken clips from a longer video and hope you will find this enjoyable, meaningful, and perhaps see truth in the authenticity of these young voices, hearts and minds. Most of the children featured are ages four-ten.

VIDEO

Young Kylie, who always has much to say with eyes and voice, told me not to be bossy; you heard her. However, I do want to remind you of our school's mission.

St. Paul's School for Girls educates the minds and hearts of girls in a supportive and intellectually challenging community that encourages respect, integrity, creativity and spiritual growth, preparing them as independent and confident young women to embrace the extraordinary opportunities of our complex world.

I hope that we live our mission as a school and use our core values of respect, integrity, spiritual growth and creativity together in marvelous ways this year. In fact, I will continue to bring this acronym of RISC, R for respect, I for integrity, S for spiritual growth, and C for creativity to the front of our mental dashboard this year.

The filter of using RISC as one through which we live, learn, and grow together will guide us towards excellence and help our community to be one in which we all reach and become our best selves. So, maybe some of these great ideas, ranging from two recesses to snowballs will be brought forth by our sensible student government. Maybe I will be doing *lots and lots* of paperwork; maybe I will find myself dressed in scarves and mittens more often than not; maybe we'll have another year of football champions, what do you say? Maybe ...

What I do know is that you each matter to me, and we all matter to each other. So, welcome to this year. It is certain to be brilliant if we all join hearts, hands, and minds and commit to holding each other to our best.

As for the butterflies in my stomach, of course I have them. In fact, I have over 400 of them hanging in my office. We'll save them and the conversation around them for another Prayers Talk.

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of a new school year, for those who worked behind the scenes to help our campus and rooms to be ready, for the faculty and staff who continue to set high standards for themselves and each of us through their own growth, for our caregivers who nurture us and provide the SPSG experience for us as an effort to help us reach our potential. Thank you for our wonderful students, our girls! Thank you for supporting us as we take healthy RISCs together as a true community this year and for the years ahead.

Amen