



Dear Members of the Class of 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022,

Each summer, the whole SEM community reads a book together. When we return from summer break, students and teachers come together for an All-School Read event, where we explore the meaning and themes that resonated with us. This year's selection is *The Road to Character* by David Brooks.

David Brooks is most well known for being a columnist for *The New York Times*, and for his regular appearances on the PBS *NewsHour* as a political commentator; even so, this is not a political book. It is about something more fundamental, it is about virtues, goodness, and of course as the title denotes, character. One of the reasons we've landed on this work is to create a shared understanding of what character is. Character is one of those beautiful words like community that is so tremendously important, but tends to mean different things to different people. Brooks, clearly and poetically provides a language for what character is, and argues that we learn it best through the examples of strong and humble people. This being the case, the book is primarily made up of biographical essays about various people who lived meaningful, fascinating but purposeful lives. We will all read this, because we care tremendously about justice, about doing what is right, and because on our journey to do so, we are surrounded by caring lovely people who will help us develop character.

Please read the following chapters of *The Road to Character* in this order: first, Chapter 2 (16-48), then Chapter 6 (130-152—fair warning, this chapter includes some sexual content), then the Introduction (xi-xvii), then Chapter 1 (3-15), and finally Chapter 10 (240-270). If you'd like to read beyond what is required, you are of course welcome to do so. As for obtaining a copy, the title and author, or the ISBN: 978-1594139376 is all the information you need to purchase a copy from your local or online book seller. You could borrow a copy from the library—though we strongly recommend that you get your own copy, so that you can mark it up and revisit it throughout the year. Enjoy reading *The Road to Character* this summer, and look forward to an awesome discussion about it when we return in the fall.

As for summer work and back-to-school supplies, if you have a course that assigns summer work, it will be posted on the corresponding portal course page by July 9, 2018 at the latest. Back-to-school supply lists for year-long and 1st trimester courses will be up on portal by August 1, 2018. If you have any questions about your schedule or summer work please contact Dean of Students Sara Sieczkarski.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kanika Durland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kanika Durland
Assistant Head of School for Academics and Equity