Dear Burke's Community,

Happy New Year! I hope that 2017 will be a prosperous and meaningful year for you and your family.

Our break over the holidays gave me the opportunity to reflect on what, together, we accomplished at Burke's last fall. While students have been hitting the books, Makery spaces, and tablets, the Board of Trustees has focused on further bolstering Burke's by pushing toward the full implementation of our four-year Strategic Plan, now in year three. Of recent, particular note is the outstanding work of our Diversity Task Force.

Based on its recommendations at the end of last year, the Diversity Task Force 2.0 is in the process of examining and implementing impactful practices and policies. The new Student Transportation Pilot Program is a major piece of their work. The pilot has just gotten underway, with 27 girls participating in a bus route that shuttles them from four stops throughout the city, starting near the 101/280 freeway interchange, to the Burke's campus each morning. We will be closely monitoring this new service for our community, with hopes that its success will lead to more routes next year. My tremendous thanks go to board member Stephanie Bailey, our Controller Jeff Jackson, and their committee for their leadership and tireless efforts in launching this program.

The Task Force is actively working on turning recommendations into action for its other areas of focus, with diversity speaker and trainer Rosetta Lee leading the Board of Trustees in our October retreat, in addition to ongoing evaluation and analysis of the Burke's tuition model. You can read much more about Burke’s diversity efforts in the winter issue of the KayDeeBee, which is hitting your mailboxes soon.

We’re also seeing new classroom initiatives grow and expand from needs that were identified in the Strategic Plan. Examples include:

- A thoughtful and integrated expansion of service learning into the school curriculum, which was launched following the faculty's service-learning Professional Development Institute in June 2016. Burke’s faculty has been working to develop new in-class projects that expand our students’ sense of citizenship, leadership skills, and global awareness. Look for upcoming projects regarding food insecurity in the seventh grade and caring for our physical space in second grade, among others later this school year.

- The expansion of Social Emotional Learning in the Upper School with a new class called HEART: Health, Emotional Awareness, Responsibility, and Time Management. The class is co-taught by the librarian, learning specialist, counselor, and Makery facilitator, bringing together a broad curriculum that touches on digital citizenship, study skills, research, and more.

- Innovative curricula, such as Inspirational Math techniques that allow for open-ended inquiry and our third annual Week of Code, which drew CODE.org founder Hadi Partovi to campus to observe for himself along with a film crew from The Economist.
A strong start, yes, but we still have much to look forward to for the rest of this year. Be sure to keep a lookout for announcements about Burke’s programs and policies that are a direct result of our Strategic Plan work, serving to bring Burke’s further into the 21st century. It’s demanding, yet rewarding work in service to our school mission, the constant which keeps us inspired and energized. The currents of joy and excitement that run through campus are difficult to miss.

We also have a full slate of events coming up this spring, including Burke’s wonderfully fun Dinner Auction. Mark your calendars now for Saturday, April 1, when — no joke — the annual event makes its return to Bimbo’s. I can’t wait to see you there.

Warmest regards,

Evie Davis
President, Burke’s Board of Trustees