

Commonwealth Governor's School Welcome Letter

August 23, 2017

Dear Friends of the Commonwealth Governor's School,

Back to school is always an exciting time of year, and this year may be more exciting than most as we celebrate our 20th Anniversary! While this program has changed over the last two decades, the mission of providing a challenging, differentiated course of studies for highly motivated and academically talented students has never faltered. For years, students, teachers, and families have worked together to create an incredible setting where collaboration, engagement, and innovation became the pillars of our community. We are hoping to further promote those values as we look forward to this year and years to come.

Some of the things that are new to CGS this year are:

- New Faculty – While the reality of education is that staff is not static, we'd like to wish the best to those who have retired or moved on to other opportunities. It is our profound honor to welcome the newest members of our CGS family. They are: Mr. Robert Bumgarner (King George Science), Mr. Brian Cannavo (Riverbend English), Mrs. Meredith Lohr (Riverbend Science), Mrs. Jessica Lowden (Spotsylvania English),
- Enrichment Day – One of the goals of CGS is to promote life-long learning in the academic arena and through the exploration of non-academic interests. In November, the six CGS sites will dedicate time out of the schedule to investigate a multitude of extra-curricular pursuits students may want to explore. Teachers will be hosting 30 minute, 1 hour, or 2 hour seminars on various subjects that align with teacher interests, hobbies, and are not necessarily core content related; examples include fly fishing, football analytics, how to brew root beer, dyeing clothing, and many more. We hope the Enrichment Day will spark students' enthusiasm, creativity, and desire to share their interests and passions with one another.
- A New Partnership with Richard Bland College – As you know, we offer many college level AP courses, but Chemistry is a dual-enrollment course that requires an endorsement and partnership with a higher institution. Students who successfully complete this course and its requirements are guaranteed college credit in the state of Virginia, and at many institutions outside of the state. We are grateful to begin this partnership and to continue providing challenging opportunities for our students.
- Increased Outreach to Other Schools – We have been working hard to connect with regional elementary and middle schools in order to breed excitement about CGS and the unique aspects of the program. Recently, we have committed to providing STEM and Humanities workshops, mentoring opportunities, and educational forums to younger students who want to experience upper-level content, and interact with high school students and staff.

It is our sincerest hope to strengthen our relationships with CGS families, and reconnect with our alumni as we revel in this 20th Anniversary. Furthermore, CGS wants to continue providing innovative curriculum and programming opportunities to its students. If you wish to assist in these efforts as a site volunteer, PTO member, program advisory committee member, or culminating expert, please do not hesitate to contact the CGS program office at 540-548-1278. Thank you.

Most sincerely,

Merri Kae VanderPloeg, Ed.D., CGS Director