

Welcome Everyone, officially, to the 2018-2019 school year! It's wonderful to have everyone together to mark this important moment – this first day of a new school year, and our first day of the last year of our Class of 2019. If the Great Class of 2019, all 96 of you, could stand to be recognized, that would be great!

Thank you. We are so proud of you, and we look forward to your leadership this year.

I also want to welcome the new members of our King community, beginning with our class of 2022, our new Ninth Grade Class. Ninth grade, you are 95 students strong, and we are welcoming 37 of you as new members of the class. Would the Class of 2022 please stand to be recognized!

We have nine new members of the Class of 2021 --- our tenth grade, which is 94 students strong. New members of this class, please stand to be recognized!

We also have three new members of our class of 2020, our junior class. It's a brave thing to be a new junior, but at King we do brave things all the time, so you are in good company! Please welcome the three new members of our junior class – new students, please stand...

Finally, we welcome several new faculty to our Upper School community. I will name them, and ask them to stand, and then we will give them a good King welcome altogether. First, in the History department, we have Ms. Rossler and Ms. Ackley; in the

Innovation Lab, we have new Director Ms. Warren; in the Computer Science and Math departments we welcome Dr. Merriweather; in the Math department, we welcome Dr. Tonniolo; in the Performing Arts department we welcome Ms. Cadell; and in the Social Sciences, teaching AP Psychology is Mr. Snyder. These are all very experienced, highly accomplished educators, and I know you will benefit from their wisdom and energy going forward. Please give all of them a big King welcome.

SO....welcome to everyone. This morning I was wishing everyone Happy New Year, and though I know it's not January, I think for those of us whose lives are school-centered, the first day of school is really our new year's day. Newness, or firsts of anything, have so much hope and possibility attached to them – and perhaps also nervous anticipation and maybe even fear and worry. These are all feelings, as you know. Feelings can inspire us and derail us; excitement and happiness can occur in the same day, sometimes even the same minute, as anxiety and fear. It is a central truth of humanity that we have great capacity for empathy, warmth, compassion, and of course for what we at King call our Virtues – Respect, Kindness, integrity, and Perseverance. We have great capacity for all of these qualities, as the humanities in particular and our experience with each other reminds us of daily. But humans also have great capacity for cruelty and the deep fear that undergirds cruelty, usually fear of the “other” or people or ideas or things we don't understand or that seem to fly in the face of our identities. As our study of the humanities in particular and our

experience with each other reminds us, we have great capacity for these things, too. We lie to ourselves if we don't see that we can be kind AND we can be mean. We can easily hang with those who are just like us because we are too afraid to step outside of comfort zones, AND we can open ourselves through curiosity to both those who are like us AND those who are not. We can easily take care of ourselves in a healthy way, honoring our integrity in our studies, our friendships, our relationships with others – AND we are capable of wasting our precious time and energy on pursuits that dishonor our bodies and our minds, as well as those of others. At King, we recognize that it's too simple to say, "be good, be kind, be respectful, etc." We also say "have integrity," which includes knowing your WHOLE self, including the parts we don't like so much, and then we say, "have perseverance" to work on strengthening the muscles of our humanity that bring out our BEST selves.

This year, our theme is TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES AND OTHERS. We can't do one without the other. They are related. Please take a moment now to think of one person in your life who might need some care right now. Take a moment right now to think of one thing that you'd like to work on about yourself this year as a student, learner, friend. Take a moment to think about one person who cares about you somewhere in this world. Now think about how you will bring your best self to this community, to King this year. One thing you might do.

SO...you just starting thinking of a new year's resolution there. Okay...enough for this first day of school. I and the teachers

here, as well as the staff, believe in you and call you to greatness, and we all hold ourselves up on this first day of school to the possibility the growth. Take care of yourselves. Take yourselves seriously. Be your best selves.

Happy New Year!

It is now my privilege to introduce you to our new head of school, Dr. Karen Eshoo.