

October 1, 2019

Dear Upper School Families,

In mankind's most ancient investigations of nature, astronomers were puzzled by the apparently disorderly motions of the planets in the night sky (*planetes* means "wanderer" in Greek), as compared to the tidy arcs traced by the stars.

Over the centuries, we would come to learn that the apparent irregularity of their paths is due, in part, to the fact that planets move more quickly when their orbits bring them closer to the sun, and more slowly when they're further out.

Our students — *wanderers* in their own right upon the path to wisdom — observe a similar phenomenon in their own lives at this time of year; now September hours and days dash by while Summer remains a fresh memory. It will not seem this way in February, but we can marvel together in astonishment of the fact that nearly a quarter of the year has passed by already.

These next several weeks will be quite full. Students should expect to see several tests and quizzes on the horizon in most of their classes for the next two weeks; we are also aiming to lighten the load in other respects where possible. Parents interested in helping students prepare for assessments are encouraged to read through the Study Skills Manual linked [here](#), and to reach out to teachers or peers with questions as necessary.

Parents can expect to see sign-up information sent out soon for Parent-Teacher Conferences on October 14-16, along with other information to help you prepare for these meetings.

We're still hoping for more responses to the High School Homework Survey from parents. If you haven't yet, please complete one for each of your students in the High School ([Freshman Survey](#), [Sophomore Survey](#), [Junior Survey](#)).

Finally, thank you for turning out to the Fall Festival this past Saturday! It was our greatest participation yet, and the day was filled with all manner of jolly activities in support of our community. Our deepest admiration goes out to Amanda Nicholls and the many other parents and volunteers (students among them!) who helped to make the day a great success!

Sincerely,

Philip Althage  
Headmaster, Upper School  
Great Hearts Irving