



# DE LA SALLE ACADEMY

*Celebrating 35 years of Educational Excellence*

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Fall 2018

Dear DLSA Community,

It is with great joy that I welcome you to our thirty-fifth year at De La Salle Academy! As we begin a new school filled with many changes and transitions, many aspects remain the same. In the mornings, students and teachers greet each other with loving hugs and firm handshakes. New sixth graders emerge from subway stations shouldering mountains of books and school supplies. Seventh graders welcome their new classmates and quickly begin to dive into their most challenging academic year yet. Meanwhile, eighth graders embark with a mix of hope and anxiety on their quest to find a high school that is just right for them.



The official start of our year was marked by the opening school ceremony where students signed the Code of Conduct and committed themselves to living the Elements of Community (Care, Support and Respect). In my opening remarks, I emphasized that at the heart of our work this year lies the need for us to be countercultural. Together, the Elements of Community and the Code of Conduct push us past cheap laughs, popular opinions or comfortable routines, and instead towards the higher demands of being more loving, caring, and supportive persons. In this quest to acquire good judgment and cultivate a loving community, there will often be missteps that will, in turn, require feedback and accountability. I cautioned our students not to mistake maturity with our ability to deal with these setbacks on our own. Instead, I asked our student body to see growth as the ability to identify times when we need support from others, especially caring adults. In a time when our popular culture has, to varying degrees, normalized a complete separation between the world of the adults and the world of our youth, I asked students and faculty to be different and make greater efforts to see the value in their time together.

In this first month of school, I have witnessed first-hand how students and adults alike have begun the work of building a loving community. Care is visible when an eighth grader helps a new student organize their planner during a study hall, or when new parents arrive for their late evening meeting after a long day of work. Support is alive when I observe a faculty member teach an overwhelmed new student how to use a combination lock before homeroom, or a student volunteering to help a faculty member set up chairs before a parent meeting. Respect is palpable when I overhear faculty discussing ways to collaborate on future units of study to more fully engage our students, or when I walk into classrooms and see students with heavily annotated texts ready to ask teachers thought-provoking questions.

These moments from my first month as principal have filled me with faith that the dream that began thirty-five years ago is alive and well.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Angel Gonzalez