

## Letter from the Principal March, 2007

Parents,

As we move beyond the mid-way point of this semester and enter the “stretch run” of this school year, I want to make certain that everyone is up to date on the schedule for the next several months. There will undoubtedly be some items and events not included in this letter, but I believe that this correspondence will provide an update on the most important events to the whole school population.

**Report Cards** Mid-term grades will be calculated by Monday, March 26. Report cards will be issued on Friday, March 30. This is one of the most important “grade awareness” events for parents because we still have time in the semester to correct problems and to raise grades. As always, I encourage you to look for these reports (they will be given to the students in homeroom) and to schedule a conference with your child’s teachers to discuss low grades. It is always our goal that each student earns four passing grades every semester.

**The Prom** The original date on which our prom was scheduled had to be changed because of an event scheduled for the Gay Street area on that same weekend. We made the decision to change the date based upon concerns with student safety and parking. We felt that the situation, which we were unaware of at the time of contract signing, warranted our quick reaction. Thanks go out to the Bijou Theatre management, Ms. Southern, Ms. Holbert, and Ms. Lawson for their response to this predicament. The date for the prom will be Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, at the Bijou Theatre. A large parking lot is located next door to the theatre. Scheduling a prom is always a challenge, and scheduling conflicts are unavoidable. I apologize for any scheduling conflicts caused by the rescheduling of this event.

**Graduation, 2007** Graduation ceremonies will be conducted in the **Knoxville Convention Center** on Henley Street. We will graduate this year’s senior class on Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 P.M., and parking will be available in several parking garages in the proximity of the Convention Center.

**Class Registration for Underclassmen** Soon our 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders will be signing up for next year’s classes. There are a few things that I want to make you aware of as you consult with your child about course selections. All students on the **University Path and the Dual Path** are required to take a math class during their senior year. This has been dictated to us by The Board of Education and will begin next year. The article which recently ran in the News Sentinel alluded to next year’s freshmen class as the first to be affected by this new push for increased rigor. I received clarification on that on Friday. That class will be the first to be required to take math in each of their four high school years. Seniors graduating in 2008 will be required to take a math course during their senior year in order to graduate. We are going to attempt to make this development a positive one for our students. In addition to our upper-level math selections, we are going to offer a college-bound math review course which will be appropriate for those not especially strong in mathematics, and we are attempting to establish some dual-credit course selections in order for our students to receive some college credit for this new requirement. Our school offers many **Advanced Placement** level courses for students to pursue during their junior and senior years. Allow me to share some brief statistics on the AP program. Among the general population, students who take at least one AP course in high school have a **20% better chance** of graduating from college than do their counterparts who do not take such a course. Among those, students who take an AP test, even if they fail that test, increase their chances of graduating from college by **22%**. AP students who pass an AP exam will have **increased their college graduation chances by 33%**. I believe in our AP program; my teachers take great pride in their respective courses, and statistics indicate that the experience will benefit your child long after he or she leaves Halls High School.

**Important dates for the remainder of this school year**

March 26 – First day back to school following Spring Break

March 30 – Report cards issued in homerooms

April 6-9 – Easter Holidays

April 26 – Academic Banquet

April 27 – Prom

First week of May – Gateway Exams, State EOC Exams

May 4 – **Last day for those who need a Driver's License application to pick one up from Ms. Vandergriff**

May 11 – Senior Awards Day - The dress code will be announced and enforced.

May 16 – Graduation

May 22 -24 Final exams for underclassmen

May 25 –Last day of school - Report cards will be mailed to parents.

May 28 – June 1 – School office will be open. School office is open on Wednesday mornings throughout the summer

July 23 – Tentative date for summer school to be held at Halls High

August 1 – The registration of new students begins

August 3 - Red Devil Days for upperclassmen

August 8 - Freshman Open House and Orientation

August 9 – First day of school ½ day

September 13 – Open House 6:30 – 8:00

September 27 – Parent-Teacher Conferences 4:00 – 6:00

As always, I want to thank-you for both your support for our school and for entrusting us with your child's education. Contrary to the report on public education published in the March 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the News Sentinel, I believe that Knox County does a thorough job of preparing children for life after high school. We surpass the State average in every facet of accountability as well as most systems in the amount of money spent on each student. Knox County does not rank very high in the amount paid to its teachers; therefore, it is even more impressive that its children receive such a high quality education in this system. Since Halls High is ahead of most of the other area high schools in the same areas of accountability, you can imagine how proud I am of my staff.

Mark Duff

Halls High School  
4321 E. Emory Rd.  
Knoxville, TN. 37918