

Foothills Focus



Foothills School provides a vibrant learning community where students develop personal, academic, and social responsibility – leading to a lifetime of discovery.

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A Great Year Ahead!

*"A scholar who cherishes the love of comfort is not fit to be deemed a scholar."
- Lao-Tzu*

Welcome to a wonderful new year at Foothills School! I am very pleased to be entering my fourth year as the Head of School and am delighted that we're headed for our best year yet.

I know we're going to be great this year because I've seen developments toward that all summer. In our returning parents asking good questions to make our curricula better. In our recruiting efforts to bring outstanding new talent to our school's leadership. In our new families, who have come to Foothills looking for a unique educational experience for their child. And, this month, I've seen it in our staff as we work to set our priorities for the coming year.

2010-11 is the year where Foothills goes from "good to great" – in every domain. Inspired by the great book, Good to Great, by Jim Collins, the members of the school's administration and faculty are identifying everywhere we can improve; confronting our own discomforts and challenging our assumptions; and making plans to positively affect the education of every child and the experience of every

family in our school.

For those of you returning to Foothills, the improvements and changes we have made structurally are immediately evident. Over the summer, construction contractors re-carpeted most of the floors of the school, planned and constructed a new lobby, changed the configuration of our Junior classroom, and added fresh paint throughout the building. The astonished looks as you return and the compliments are appreciated, as is the continuing support of the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation that made these improvements possible.

Our summer also included planning to enhance our academic program. We have created a leadership model among our faculty that will enable curricular teams to improve educational outcomes in content areas across all grade levels. We have reviewed the results of our standardized mathematics testing and have identified ways we will continue to strengthen our teaching of math facts, alongside analytical and problem solving skills. The staff has also developed a new approach to our CHOICE electives curriculum that will emphasize leadership training for older students and increased academic options at all grade levels.

Parents will also see a significant improvement in technology to support the education of your children. We have increased computing capacity in every classroom, a SMART Board is now a part of the school's teaching toolbox, and we continue to improve the educational software available school wide.

With a confident eye to the future, the Board of Trustees is launching the school's first community-wide strategic planning and long-range financial planning process this year. We laid the groundwork for this activity by completing the school's first competitive market analysis in the Spring, and now we're ready to think about our future with the engagement of our faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni and alumni parents, and community and regional leaders. This effort will be a fearless analysis of where we have been, are today, and expect to be in the future – and I hope you will be a part of the process!

This is going to be an outstanding year at Foothills School and I am grateful for your commitment to this progressive school in the heart of downtown!

Shawn Ann Shepherd
Head of School

Get to know Shawn at a Parent Only Brown Bag Luncheon on Sept. 10 at Noon!

Foothills Welcomes New Team Members

Meet the Two New Members of the Administrative Team!

Susan Wolfe – Director of Education. Susan is an award-winning educator and accomplished administrator, having served as an upper-grades classroom teacher for 18 years and an assistant principal for two years. She earned her **Bachelor of Arts in Teaching from Boise State**; her **Masters of Arts in Teaching from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon**. Her administrative training includes the completion of the **Specialist in Educational Administration from the University of Idaho**. She has been honored with several awards, including the Associated Oregon Industries Oregon Education Excellence Award and the Oregon Elementary Social Studies Teacher of the Year Award. These prestigious awards recognized her ability as a classroom teacher to engage students with relevant, exciting learning activities tied to core curriculum and state standards. Susan is an [-SAGE](#) past-president, and serves on that organization’s board. Susan lives in Boise with her family, husband Alan, and children Alexandra (14) and Jason (9). Both children have attended Foothills School.

Piers Lamb – Director of Student Life. Piers is an Idaho native and earned a **B.S. in Recreation Management and a minor in Outdoor Leadership from The University of Idaho**. Most recently, Piers worked for The Blaine County Recreation District in Hailey, Idaho, serving as the Youth and Teen Coordinator. Piers organized and created a variety of programs and special events for Wood River Valley residents including summer camps, after-school programs, concerts, tournaments, and fundraisers. Piers will bring to Foothills a passion for creating a variety of opportunities for students, along with strong networking, fundraising, and marketing skills. Piers is very excited to explore and make accessible all of the great opportunities that exist in and around Boise; from sports to clubs to community outreach, Piers is thrilled to make the student experience at Foothills enriching and enjoyable. He has moved to Boise this summer with his wife, Kristen, son and new EL student, Charlie, and daughter, Olivia.



*Left: Susan Wolfe and her family
Right: Piers Lamb and his family*

**IMPORTANT FOR PARENTS:
ACCESS THE INTERNAL WEBSITE WEEKLY!**

The school uses two primary tools to communicate our progress, happenings, and deadlines to our parent community. First is this monthly newsletter, FOOHILLS FOCUS, made available via email and in hard copy at the school. But even more important is our website. In addition to all of the external pages that share information about the school, we are pleased to have a *comprehensive internal website for our learning community members and expect parents to check the website every week.*

To access the website, go to: www.foohillsschool.org; then access the “Current Families” tab; enter your pass code (made available at Parent Orientation on September 2, and by email confirmation by contacting cangelos@foohillsschool.org); from there, visit our internal home page and student classroom page/s!

Parent Orientation on September 2

Foothills Parents: Please join us for Parent Orientation on Thursday, September 2, at the school. New Parent Orientation will be from 5:30 – 6:00 p.m. in the music room, followed by All-Parent Orientation from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. This year you’ll be able to chat with new Administrative Team members, Susan Wolfe and Piers Lamb (we’re thrilled they’re here!), spend time with your child’s teachers, meet other parents, and get the information you need to help your child start the year off right. We’re looking forward to making this the best year at Foothills yet, and coming to Orientation gives you a good start.

All-School Student Celebration

Student Celebration for K-9th grade students will be on Friday, September 10. For those new to the school, Student Celebration is a long-standing tradition in which Foothills students get to celebrate the start of the new year with students from other grades, and spend the afternoon playing games and having fun at Ann Morrison Park. Students **need to bring sack lunches, wear comfortable walking shoes, and wear their Foothills T-shirt**, which they will get at school early in the first week. Parents are welcome to join their child for lunch; just bring a sack lunch and plan to meet up with your child’s class *before* they walk to the park around noon. Let the celebrating begin!

CLASS NEWS: MEET THE FOOTHILLS FACULTY



The Early Learners Team

The Early Learner teachers are four amazing and diverse individuals. **Carrie McKee-Little** has been teaching for 11 years and is particularly passionate about the visual arts as a language for young children. **Joni Cornell** brings seven years of teaching experience with her, including a love for outdoor education and natural science. **Bekah Barnett** has brought an enthusiasm for music and theatre arts to Foothills for seven years. **Jennifer Trudell** loves working with young children and has been especially excited to observe mathematical and literacy development in the EL students after having taught for 13 years in the Primary Class at Foothills, with 2009-10 being her first year teaching in the ELs.



The Primary Team

This year's Primary team includes three full-time teachers: **Tanya Bottarini, Michelle Forrester, and Justin Brune**. As a team the Primaries have twenty years combined experience at Foothills. Tanya Bottarini will return for her second year in the Primaries. Michelle Forester is now a full-time Primary teacher, after working part-time these past few years. Justin Brune is returning to the Primaries after spending the last few years with the Senior class. What we value about Foothills is the opportunity to make meaningful connections with our students and forming important partnerships with parents to create a fun and safe learning environment for children. We look forward to creating memories with our new class of amazing students.



The Junior Team

Veteran Junior teacher, Camilla Barnes-Kelly, is sad to report that this summer she relinquished the Light Weight World Championship Octopus Wrestling Title, "Suckers of Steel," along with the 8 Bracelets of Power, after a grueling three-hour match with Octavius the Awful. Jess McGinnis explored extreme agriculture this summer. The 20-foot-tall rhubarb in her backyard is developing menacing teeth but the larger pumpkins are quite handy potting sheds and guest rooms when hollowed out and ventilated properly. **Jessica Haas** is an exciting new addition to the Junior team. Her fine motor skills are astounding as is demonstrated by her latest creation: the entire Emancipation Proclamation written in calligraphy on a necklace made of single grains of rice. With all their varied talents, the Junior Team is looking forward to an incredible year together! [With the most returning families in the school, this team thought they should have a little fun with their introductions; if you'd like to know how great these teachers really are, take a look at their experience and backgrounds in your PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK – and definitely meet this creative group!]



The Intermediate Team

Jude McDougall returns for her third year in the Intermediate classroom. She received a B.A. in Journalism from St. Michael's College in Vermont, and then traveled abroad where she taught and built schools in Africa, Japan, Nepal, India, Guatemala, and places in between. **Robbie Prokop** attended UW Madison and Stevens Point (B.S. in Wildlife Ecology-Management), and became involved with local environmental education programs. Upon moving to Boise, he continued to work extensively in environmental education and youth soccer. He's been at Foothills 12 years.



The Senior Team

Ray Vizgirdas, **Dan Fisher** and **Kevin Kramer** are returning to teach in the Senior Class this year. Ray will begin his second year at Foothills as the Nines lead teacher and as the Middle School Pre-Algebra teacher. Dan is back for his fifth year at Foothills. He will continue to teach Language Arts and History & World Culture. Kevin will return to make it an even dozen at Foothills. He will continue to teach Science and Algebra (with the aid of a brand new SMART Board!). We hope your child is as excited as we are for another mind-expanding year at Foothills.



NINES Program News

As the Summer slowly fades into Fall, there is much to look forward to in the Nines Program. For one thing, we've added another science course to the curriculum – Biology – which should be fun as our lead Nines teacher **Ray Vizgirdas** is a biologist by training and has spent about 25 years working as a professional biologist. Students will explore the chemistry of life, cells, ecology, genetics, and evolution in class, lab, and field experiences. There should be a lot of integration between this class and Physical Science; for example, as we study birds and flight, we'll be learning about the physics of how flight is possible in these organisms. Other courses in the program this year include U.S. History, English, Speech, Technical Reading and Writing, Art, Spanish, and Music. A very ambitious schedule, but one designed so that students can better appreciate the complex world we live in.



The Specialist Team – Art, Music & Spanish

Tara Kennedy, **Jessica Dean**, and **Emily Williams** are ready for another great year growing in arts, language and culture. Teaching across all classes provides a wonderful opportunity to get to know every child in the school. We continue to integrate the arts into the classroom curriculum providing a rich, well-rounded program. Please remember to check our individual web pages regularly for announcements, volunteer opportunities and homework updates. If you are interested in volunteering your time or skills to the arts subjects, please contact us!

In addition to these outstanding faculty members, the school is currently recruiting a part-time instructor of Theatre Arts; watch the webpage for an announcement of this new team member. Additionally, throughout the year the school involves many community leaders and organizations in our CHOICE electives curriculum. These talented outside resources are a great contributor to the community! If you are interested in teaching a CHOICE class, please email @foothillsschool.org.

EDUCATION DIRECTOR NOTES

Each month Education Director, Sue Wolfe, will create a column that helps illuminate more about our school's unique approach to education and assessment of learning. If there's something you'd like to see her address in a column, email swolfe@foothillsschool.org.

Foothills Faculty Content Leads New This Year

Teacher leadership is not a 21st Century idea. Teacher and leader were one, as described by Plato: examine his accounts of the dialogues of Socrates, from his first days in the Lyceum to his fateful sip of hemlock and his journey to Elysian Fields. When teachers are encouraged to take a leadership role, they help to create an environment of critical thinking, deepening the collective understanding.

Understanding content standards (how various components of the curriculum link together) and how to use the curriculum in planning instruction and assessment, is essential to ensuring consistent curriculum implementation throughout a school. At Foothills, our teachers are assembled into collaborative teams differentiated by content. This model of shared leadership engages teachers in critical work. This results in improved instructional practice and an increase in student learning.

Our **Faculty Content Leads** have a particular expertise in certain academic areas to lead teacher training sessions and provide a contact for parents who have questions regarding the particular academic area. During the school-year, questions may arise. When they do, please contact the following teachers:

Action Research* – Jessica McGinnis
Language and Literature – Dan Fisher
Mathematics – Camilla Barnes-Kelly
Science – Robbie Prokop
Social Studies – Justine Brune

*Action Research will be described in an upcoming *Foothills Focus*.

Among the most important roles teacher-leaders assume is that of learner. Learners model continual improvement, demonstrate lifelong learning, and use what they learn to help all students achieve. In other words, we're living our mission to ALL be lifelong learners!

Parking Regulations Assure Student Safety

One of the most important things we do as a community is assure that we provide a safe environment for learning and growing. At Foothills School, our unique downtown location is our best asset and our largest challenge – particularly at the drop-off in the morning and pick-up in the afternoon. All parents, and others responsible for moving students to and from the school, must follow these safety regulations at all times:

- ***The :15 Second Rule – don't park for more than :15 seconds in front of the school at any time, as the school is a non-parking zone;***
- ***Never double-park in front of the school – this is extremely dangerous as students can't be seen moving between cars;***
- ***When walking to and from the school, cross only at crosswalks with your students;***
- ***There are absolutely no U-turns on 8th Street; and***
- ***If you're cycling to school, disembark from your bicycle in front of the school and walk your bikes safely to a bike rack – our sidewalk is simply not wide enough to accommodate bicycles and our 150 students.***

Following these guidelines is an expectation of all members of our community and assures that we are all safe at all times.

Volunteers Welcome – and Needed!

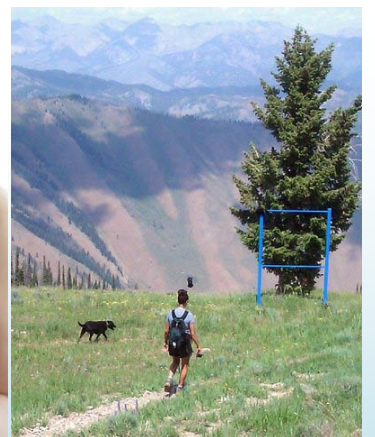
Since 1992 we have been a learning organization committed to making a difference in the lives of our students and our families. We would like to make it possible for all parents to contribute to our community by becoming a volunteer at the school. When the whole family is involved, parent/child relations and family/school relations are strengthened, and communication between home and school improves.

Providing various opportunities for participation of and contributions by all parents is one way to ensure that parents' gifts of time and energy are best used and appreciated. There are so many ways to get involved – from classrooms to Board committees to chaperoning. Whatever your interests and availability, there is sure to be a volunteer opportunity that fits. Let us know your commitment to volunteerism by emailing plamb@foothillsschool.org or cangelos@foothillsschool.org today!



From Left to Right: **Jess McGinnis** and her sons, Gabe (the tall one) and Sam (the smiley one), explore the little canyon leading to Jump Creek Waterfall in western Idaho. • **Kevin Kramer**, Ryan, Tyler, & Sophie enjoyed an amazing week swimming, body surfing, and shark tooth collecting on Sarasota Beach, FL. • **Bekah Barnett** spent the summer loving and playing with her son, Matthew.

“Wandering re-establishes the original harmony which once existed between man and the universe.”
~ Anatole France

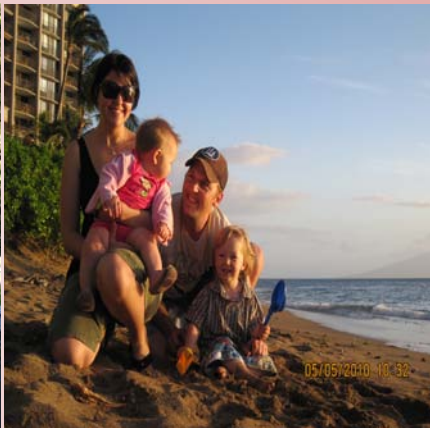


From Left to Right: **Shawn Shepherd**: “The highlight of my summer was a pre-dawn hike in Arches National Monument; as I wrote in my journal: “The margin of light gets larger and larger, and with each few minutes in the pre-dawn still, another bird or lizard or snake comes to life. I hear the sounds of shifting around me and the mourning dove call is the predecessor to what will be a cacophony of songbirds when the sun breaks the mountain range.” It was a great moment to catch the sun just as it broke the dramatic stone- and sand-scapes.” • **Michelle Forrester** had fun sand-boarding in the California sun. • **Carrie McKee** “spent the summer getting to know the new man in her life.” • **Tanya Bottarini** enjoyed hiking Bald Mountain.



From Left to Right: **Justin Brune** and family at Mo's Chowder House in Newport, Oregon. • **Anthony Keys** at Iguazu Falls in Argentina. • **Cassie Angelos** and **Katy Young** went up on the Zip-Line at Tamarack.

*"A true photograph need not be explained, nor can it be contained in words."
~ Ansel Adams*

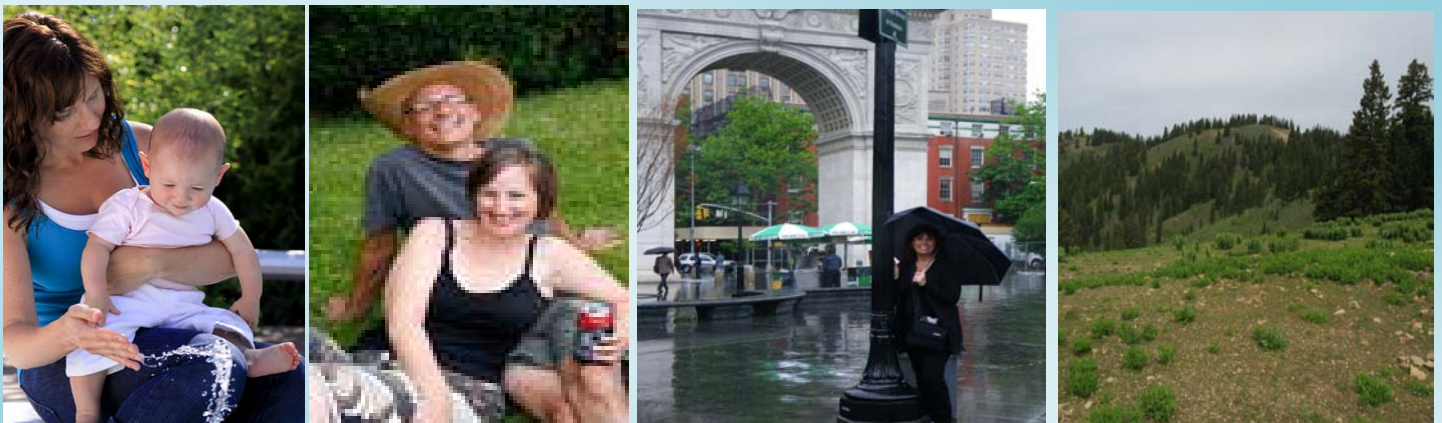


From Left to Right: **Robbie Prokop** and his family movin' on up. • **Piers Lamb** and his family enjoying some Maui sand. • **Jude McDougall** rafting the Lower Gorge of the Salmon River.



From Left to Right: **Dan Fisher** and his wife traveled to the Southeast for a Fisher family reunion. "The Live Oak trees just outside of Charleston, S.C. were incredible." • **Jennifer Trudell** had a lot of fun playing with her kids Starla and Gus at Avery Park in Corvallis, Oregon. • **Jessica Dean** did some fire-dancing on the Oregon Coast. • **Joni Cornell** "climbed Mt. Borah with my husband and our good friends. It took us eight hours to summit and a total of 12 hours to complete. The climb up was hard but the views from the top were worth the hard work. During this trip I also caught a brook trout fly fishing the Big Lost River, which was so exciting for me. We had a wonderful and safe summer."

**"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams.
Live the life you have imagined."
~ Henry David Thoreau**



From Left to Right: **Katy Young** enjoyed the summer with her daughter Ali. • **Will and Renae Knapp** on the 4th of July. • **Susan Wolfe** enjoying the New York rain. • **Ray Vizgirdas** spent most of the summer working as a seasonal biologist with the forest service in Idaho City, surveying forests and mountains for rare and endangered species of plants

Having a balanced lifestyle is one of the values our school has for our team members. That most of our staff enjoyed time away this summer helps us better serve you and your children through the joys and challenges of the school year. As a school, we ask that you respect the boundaries that make it possible for us to give 100% to your children every day. We ask our parent community to please limit evening and weekend phone calls to faculty and staff to emergency situations only. Also, we do not expect staff to be on the school's email service over weekends and holidays, so look for our prompt responses to emails during school weeks.

News from the Board of Trustees

Wow...that was a fast summer! Someone once said that raising a family involves long days and short years! This certainly rings true in our family. With that, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, welcome to the 2010-2011 school year for Foothills School of Arts and Sciences! For many reasons, I expect this year to be one of the most progressive, dynamic and exciting school years in our history!

From the perspective of the Trustees, over the past few years we have invested a lot of time, energy and planning to support Shawn Shepherd and the faculty and staff in incrementally improving several areas of our school. Some of the obvious highlights already in place for 2010-11 include: Head of School, Shawn Shepherd, beginning her fourth academic year with an expanded administrative team to better serve our families and faculty with the addition of a full-time Director of Education, Sue Wolfe, and a Director of Student Life, Piers Lamb; the improved physical facilities with a remodel and upgrade in the common areas and classrooms; providing students with a richer experience within our CHOICE curriculum; targeted community involvement; and maintaining enrollment above the 150 student mark. At the Board level, we've revised the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees to shore up, define and clarify the roles of our leadership and volunteer organization

We are pleased to have engaged three new, fantastic Trustees to the Board in parent Cameron Morfit, and community members Mary Givens and Diana Ellis. A brief bio of each is included in this newsletter; take a moment to familiarize yourselves with these great folks, and you will understand why I am so excited to have them on the team. We'd also like to thank three departing Board members, Michelle Sabick, Hillary Roth and Ben Quintana, for their service and dedication to Foothills.

In order to better serve the school, the Executive Committee has been expanded by one person, and now we will have the benefit of having the immediate past Board Chair continuing to serve on this important committee. The Executive Committee includes Past Chair, John Stevens; Vice Chair, Jennifer Swartz; Treasurer, John Paschke; Secretary, Claudia Day; and me. A lot was accomplished over the past few years and looking forward we have some key initiatives to advance. We are embarking on a robust strategic plan review for Foothills that will take the full school year to complete. Within that endeavor, we will be refining the message of the school so that we can be more confident and coordinated in understanding and articulating the uniqueness and value of the educational opportunities offered here to the outside world. We will shortly be seeking volunteers to be involved with the strategic planning committee.

Additionally, we want to put more organization around the volunteer opportunities to help the school. This may lead us to a more formalized and structured parent organization. We are blessed with fantastic families who are willing to invest time and effort, from direct classroom volunteer involvement to service on specific committees and work groups. But we can do a better job of defining and communicating the specific needs, tasks and opportunities and matching them with the interest and talents found within our families and friends. The objective is better defined outcomes leading to improved results. I have asked John Stevens to lead this effort in determining what that organization should be. Anyone interested in being involved in this project, please contact John (jstevens@tokre.com) or me (ezimmerglacier@gmail.com) directly.

As a parent, I am thankful every day that my kids have the opportunity to attend a school like Foothills, where they not only get the academics, but also get reinforcement of our family values of personal responsibility and community participation. We are truly blessed!

- **Ed Zimmer, Board Chair**

Welcome New Board Members!



A parent representative to the Board, **Cameron Morfit** begins his term of service this year. With his daughter, Lucy, in the Primary class, and his wife, Ellen; an active volunteer at the school,

Cameron is committed to seeing the school make real progress in the next few years. He is a nationally-known sports writer, contributing most often to *Golf Magazine*. Cameron has taught nonfiction writing in the CHOICE curriculum.

The Board welcomes two new community member representatives – **Diana Ellis** and **Mary Givens**.

Diana is a retired science educator who has helped Foothills' student's transition to the public school system while serving on the teaching staff at North Junior High. Her interest in good food, good company, gardening and co-ops led her to be one of the developing partners in the local cookbook craze, ***Dinner at Your Door: Tips and Recipes for Starting a Neighborhood Cooking Co-op***.




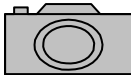


Mary Givens has been the Director of the Office of Technology Transfer within Boise State University's Division of Research since 2009. In this critical role, she implements strategies to develop private sector business opportunities based



on faculty research and facilitates relationships with the technology industry and other partners. Mary is a venture capital industry veteran with experience in providing investment evaluations, business advisory services and financing transaction management.

FOOTHILLS SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Parent Orientation 5:30 p.m. for New Parents; 6 p.m. for ALL Parents	3	4
5	6 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY NO SCHOOL	7 First Day of School K-9 	8	9	10 K-9 th School Celebration @ Old Timer's Shelter, Ann Morrison Park <hr/> Head of School Parent Brown Bag Luncheon @ Noon	11
12	13 EL 12:00 Program - First Day	14 EL 1:30 Program - First Day	15 EL 3:00 Program - First Day	16 Senior and Nines Fall Trip 	17 Trip Day Two 	18
19	20	21 Executive Committee of Board of Trustees @ 12:00 pm	22	23 Finance Committee Meeting @ 12:00 pm	24	25
26	27	28 Board of Trustees Meeting @ 4:00 pm	29 Individual Picture Day EL-9 grade 	30		
	Coming Soon...	October 6 Open House @ 6:00 pm	October 7-8 No School- Parent/Teacher Conferences	November 13 Journey on the Orient Express: Annual Auction Event	November 18 Annual Thankful Feast Celebration	