

March 17, 2018

Dear Parents,

I hope this message finds you and your family doing well and that you have been well-rested during this much needed Spring Break. It was great seeing so many students and families at our International Festival (iFest) / Spring Open House on March 6th. It was a fun event, and our staff enjoyed putting it together with your children. Monday starts the final grading period of the year, and your child's **Term 3 Report Card** should be viewable in [Skyward Family Access](#) at some point during the day on Tuesday, March 20th.

Throughout this school year I have reflected on the impact of social media in particular, but also on the impact of electronic devices in general in our lives. I have shared some of those reflections with you previously. The last few weeks have paid a particular testament to social media's power to influence our children, not always for the good. While there is no doubt that devices and social media are here to stay, I have come to believe we are at a point of critical mass in terms of the degree to which we allow these tools to be a part of our lives. I've reflected on how devices and social media have shaped my own parenting style and the outcome for my own child, but I have also started to think about how my own actions with regard to my own devices and social media are perceived by and impact my own family, my colleagues, our students, and my friends. An October 6, 2017 article from the *Wall Street Journal*, [How Smartphones Hijack our Minds](#), has much to say through recent research about how devices themselves may significantly impact the processing power of our brains and our ability to reason. This has *profound* implications for schools, especially middle schools, where childrens' centers of reasoning are still in such a formative stage of development. If nothing else, it underscores how we as adults must be the models for our students and children when it comes to what we will / will not allow our devices to do for us and how we will use them. I am much more aware now of my own patterns of use, and I am taking some proactive steps to modify my use/dependence upon my device. If you see me, ask me how it's going! I'm curious to know your thoughts on this, as well; I plan to engage with a group of students about it this Tuesday, also. You may also be interested in this [Parent's Guide to Social Media Use for Kids](#) from *Growing Leaders'* founder Tim Elmore. It has some excellent tips and information, some which I wish that I had taken advantage of when my daughter was younger.

Upcoming Items of Interest:

- **Support our Soccer Teams** - please consider purchasing soccer apparel (store closes at 11:59 PM Sunday, March 18th). [Visit this website](#) if you are interested
- **FBISD Facilities Master Planning** - Please take a moment to [take this survey](#) about FBISD Facilities. For additional information, please visit the [FBISD Facilities Master Planning website](#).
- **SLMS Calendar of Events** - please visit our [online campus calendar](#) to see what is going on this week; remember that Friday, March 30th, is Good Friday, and there will be no school.

I hope you and your family have a great week!

Keith Fickel, SLMS Principal