



# EAGLE RIDGE ACADEMY

Dear Eagle Ridge Academy Family,

My hope is that all had a restful, rejuvenating, and gratitude filled Thanksgiving Break! This Thanksgiving Break was one of the most relaxing and rejuvenating breaks that I can remember. Some of my favorite times were working out with my daughter after our Thanksgiving meal, teaching my son how to parallel park, and attending a play with my wife.

Over the past six years, my career has taken more of my time, and it has become increasingly difficult to balance it with my personal life. This problem is not unique to me, but is a reality to many families across this country. With the increased work requirements, I have had to develop a plan to be more present when with my family. Aristotle stated, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence is not an act, but a habit." How I spend my time is up to me, the individual, and it is a habit. I choose whether to spend my time at home engaged with my family instead of watching television or on my phone.

### ***Screenagers and Technology***

Technology was intended to give us more leisure time, make work more efficient to spend time with family; however, technology too often fills our time and replaces time with family, staying active, or reading a book. Eagle Ridge Academy is excited to offer the showing of the documentary *Screenagers* on Tuesday, Dec. 5 at 6:00 p.m. This a great time to learn how technology and screens are changing our lives, especially the family dynamics. Please visit our [website to sign up](#); tickets are \$5 and may be purchased online or at the door.

### **Fire Restoration**

Last month in my Community Letter, I informed you about the fire we had on Oct. 27. Just last week we received approval to start the restoration process of closing up the walls. The bottom of the affected walls were cut open to allow airflow, which eliminated the moisture build-up that can lead to mildew. After weeks of moisture and air quality tests, we have received approval to close up the walls. This process will start the second week of December and conclude after Christmas Break. The loud work will be completed at night to not disrupt learning.

### **Board Strategic Meeting**

On Nov. 18, the Eagle Ridge Academy Board of Directors held its annual Board Strategic Meeting. This year our discussion focused on four major areas: 1. Discuss the differences between an operational board versus a strategic board, 2. Review our Strategic Growth Plan from May 2014 and discuss the future, 3. Develop a K-12 Extra-Curricular Plan, and 4. Update the Board of Directors on the potential 9-12 grade academic offerings.

### ***Extra-Curricular Updates***

Eagle Ridge Academy has formed an Activities Advisory Task Force. The task force is comprised of three parents with students in K-12, an ERA Board Member, Ms. Powell (Activities Director), and me. The purpose of the task force is to develop goals for K-12 Activities and give recommendations to the ERA Board of Directors in order to further develop our programs in all activities K-12. As we have been meeting as a task force, representatives from the task force have also been meeting with our activities partner, International School of Minnesota (ISM).

The task force made the following recommendations to the Board of Directors:

1. Hire a full-time Activities Director for ERA to better support the students in clubs, youth activities, and varsity activities.
2. Offer K-6 youth sports at ERA facilities in 2018.

Eagle Ridge Academy will begin an Activities Director search before the end of the calendar year. We have also notified ISM that we will host our own youth sports. By offering our own youth sports at ERA, we will have a higher participation rate, eliminate transportation issues, and increase convenience for families.

#### *Academic Offerings in Grades 9-12*

As Eagle Ridge Academy grows to a graduating class of about 100 by 2021, we are currently planning on providing more academic offerings in the Upper School. Teacher leaders and the principal in the Upper School have been meeting for a year in order to determine some potential academic offerings in the form of electives. The electives must align with Classical Education and be desirable for students and parents.

Parents of children in grades K-12 are invited to take [this survey](#) by **Friday, Dec. 8** to give your feedback on potential electives.

Our goal is to understand what all families and students desire in electives as we want ERA to be your school of choice for your child's entire k-12 education.

#### *Eagle Ridge Academy and Potential Consulting*

Over the past few years, ERA has been approached by numerous individuals and organizations to open new schools, merge with existing schools, and to assist current schools with issues they may have. To date, ERA as an organization has not ventured down any of these paths because we wanted to focus on our growth.

The Board of Directors has researched some of these options for the past few months as we want to be prepared if we ever decide to lead one of these opportunities. At our Board Strategic Meeting, Mr. John Schwirtz and I led a conversation, and we recommended not merging or starting a new school in the near future; however, we did recommend further research around consulting with other charter schools. There is a significant need for charter school consultation because of a lack of leadership and enterprise, especially in newer schools. Eagle Ridge Academy needs charter schools to not just survive, but to thrive. Right now, many are struggling just to survive. Every time a charter school fails, it reduces the legitimacy of all charter schools.

This struggle is important to the Board of Directors and we are researching the need of consulting to other charter schools, a possible business model, and the impact on ERA.

#### **Parent Book Study**

Finally, you're invited to join me for a book study of *Plato: The Great Philosopher Educator* and dive into the historical foundation of Classical Education. The group will meet on Fridays—Feb. 2, 9, 23, & March 2—from 7:00-8:00 a.m. at Eagle Ridge Academy in Conference Room 1114. Coffee and donuts will be provided. Registration is limited to 12, so [sign up today!](#)

Sincerely,

Jason Ulbrich  
Executive Director