Dear Stakeholders,

We recently hosted our fourth annual “Your Just Desserts” volunteer recognition reception, a wonderful afternoon dedicated to honoring the individuals and organizations who have supported and encouraged our students, faculty and staff throughout the year. The theme of this year’s event was, “Oh, the Places Our Grads Have Gone!” and it gave us all the chance to look at education as a life-long journey traveled by each person at his or her own pace, by routes that are as varied as the individuals themselves.

Parents, family members, friends, teachers, administrators, mentors and community partners have all played a role in their adventures, encouraging them to stay the course, to pick up the pace or, to quote my GPS, to “recalculate” their routes. Recent IHS graduates are continuing their educations in Georgia, Florida, Montana and Alabama. Several are pursuing military careers in Germany, Italy and Korea. Others are navigating the world of full-time employment in a variety of fields.

By the time you read this letter, approximately 70 additional Independence students will have become May graduates, wrapping up this leg of their journey and making plans for what is to come. They will have joined the 71 Mini-Semester I – III seniors who completed their course requirements and passed their EOCs earlier this year. We celebrate them and their successes as we prepare to welcome new student travelers in August.

As was shared with you earlier this month at the Parent Meeting, there is an exciting trip planned for our school next year, as well; one that will involve the entire Independence family of students, parents, faculty and staff. In January of 2018, we will be returning to our original location at 791 Mimosa Boulevard in Roswell. It is with eager anticipation that we look forward to our newly renovated home, designed with our students and our unique program in mind. Stay tuned for updates in the fall; and plan to join us for the upcoming festivities.

Have a wonderful summer!

“One Vision, One Mission, One Goal: Success For All Students.”

Sincerely,
Tabatha Taylor, Principal
“One Choice Changes Everything”

On May 11, Independence students attended a school-wide assembly featuring Mr. Aiman AlSheikh, a CVS Pharmacist, and Ms. Uju Igboagui, a pharmacology student, who presented sobering statistics regarding the epidemic of prescription drug abuse in our country. IHS students learned that the United States of America accounts for only 5% of the world’s population but its citizens consume 99% of the world’s hydrocodone. Results of a 2014 Center for Disease Control study showed that someone dies of an accidental drug overdose every 19 minutes, and, for the first time in history, drug overdoses surpassed traffic accidents as a leading cause of death nation-wide.

Students watched videos focusing on the lives of four teenagers who made the one choice that changed everything; for themselves, their families and their loved ones. For those young people in the videos, lives were negatively impacted, irreparably damaged or prematurely ended.

Mr. AlSheikh and Ms. Igboagui suggested strategies for being a good friend to someone who is trapped in the cycle of abuse and shared resources to contact when seeking help for prescription drug addiction.

Social Studies

Earlier this year, Ms. Tashema Atkinson, Chairperson of the Social Studies Department, was awarded a 2017 Target Field Trip Grant and used the funds to organize a trip to the Atlanta History Center on May 18. The thirty students who accompanied Mrs. Atkinson had the opportunity to see a perspective skit, analyze primary source documents from the Civil War and participate in an interactive activity by assuming the roles of Civil War soldiers. Students were intrigued and engaged and walked away with a greater understanding of the Civil War.
English Language Arts

Fulton County Schools is employing a new literacy initiative based on Penny Kittle’s concept of “Book Love.” Ms. Kittle is a Professional Development Coordinator and Literacy Coach in the Conway, NH School District and has authored the book, *Book Love: Developing Depth, Stamina and Passion in Adolescent Readers*. The theory is that if students are able to choose their own books, finding topics which interest them rather than being assigned a book by their teachers, not only will they read, but they will begin to love reading. Using the funds allocated by FCS, Independence ELA teachers have created classroom libraries containing more than 1200 new books offering 120 titles from which to choose. Teachers continue to assess students’ knowledge and their mastery of the standards, but do so using broader themes; ex. “What is the theme of your specific book? How do the characters in your story develop?” This approach also helps to engage the readers in meaningful discussions about their books. As students complete selections they enjoy, they are excited to read another book and another and another, resulting in enhanced literacy skills. In addition to the traditional means of assessing standards mastery, teachers have used creative methods, as well. Ms. Cinda Markham incorporated technology into the assessment process by having students create websites this year. Pages on the sites were dedicated to various themes found in the books and the students were required to complete each page with the information from their selected title.

The Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest

The Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest is a character education and ethical literacy program for high school students, grades 9 – 12. The contest asks students to select a Law of Life or maxim (such as “Honesty is the best policy,” or “To give is better than to receive”), and to write a personal essay explaining how the Law of Life applies to the student’s life. The program challenges students to reflect upon core values such as perseverance, generosity, courage and compassion, and it rewards those students who are willing to take a stand for their beliefs.

Congratulations to the following IHS students for their successful essays:

Grade 12 - **Colin Davis** - School-Wide Winner- $100.00 Cash Prize - Essay Title: “Serendipity Brightens the Daily Grind”
Grade 12 - **Angie Martinez** - Honorable Mention - Essay Title: “Never Take Others for Granted”
Grade 12 - **Sean O’Connor** - Honorable Mention - Essay Title: “Failure Never Hinders Success”
Grade 11 - **J’von Jones** - Honorable Mention - Essay Title: “Knowledge is Power”

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

On Wednesday, May 17th, students from Independence High School were treated to a production of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, performed by Mended Wing Theatre Company. The traveling troupe is an ensemble comprised of seven recent graduates and current BFA students from the North Carolina School of the Arts, School of Drama. The presentation included a 45-minute interactive production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, a talk-back with the cast, and discussion about the importance of theatre in today’s society.
News From

Post-Secondary Acceptances—Congratulations to:

Yemi Mabiaku—Western Carolina University
Octavius Johnson—U.S. Naval Reserves, GA Gwinnett
Matanel Rabinowitz—U.S. Marine Corps
Jennifer Murphy—College of Coastal Georgia and East Georgia State College
Christopher Partin—American InterContinental University
Brett Pope—Kennesaw State University
Gina DiPietro—Brenau University
Mickeel Thomas—U.S. Marine Corps
Trey Baker—Fort Valley State University, Savannah State
Danilo Velasco—Santa Fe College
Emma Honeycutt—University of Alabama, U. of N. GA., Kennesaw State
Emily Venter—Western Caroline, Georgia State and UGA
Adam Montes—Georgia State University
Annie Kim—Kennesaw State and Georgia Gwinnett

Dates to Remember

May 30-July 21, 2017—Submit paperwork for August enrollment. Please visit www.independencehighschool.org for additional information
MS I—August 7—October 5, 2017
September 11—September 29, 2017—Submit paperwork for October enrollment
MS II—October 11—December 19, 2017
November 1—December 1, 2017—Submit paperwork for January enrollment
MS III—January 9—March 15, 2018
February 14—March 6, 2018—Submit paperwork for March enrollment
MS IV—March 19—May 24, 2018

MAY GRADUATES

Email notifications will be sent when diplomas are ready to be picked up. Please check your mailboxes frequently in the coming weeks.
Any outstanding fees for textbooks or library books must be paid in full prior to receiving your diploma.

Enrollment Packets may be picked up in the Office of Student Services
Monday—Friday
7:30 a.m.—2:30 p.m.

*** WE WILL HAVE A NEW ADDRESS AS OF JANUARY, 2018***

WHEN PLANNING FOR THE 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR, PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT CLASSES WILL BEGIN IN AUGUST AT OUR CURRENT LOCATION. AS OF JANUARY, 2018, OUR NEW ADDRESS WILL BE:

791 MIMOSA BOULEVARD
ROSWELL, GA 30075
First Annual IHS Opportunity Fair

More than twenty representatives from colleges, universities, branches of the military, post-secondary programs and area businesses were on hand May 12 to speak with IHS seniors at the Opportunity Fair. The event was designed to assist and inform twelfth grade students who were still undecided about their post-graduation plans.

School Attendance is one of the Keys to Success

Now is the time for Rest & Relaxation (R & R). Spend time with family and friends. It is a time to recharge those batteries! As August approaches......get ready for school! Everyone with the end in mind will be there. As a student, school is a responsibility........an important one!

How important is attending school?

Attendance rate is important because students are more likely to succeed in academics when they attend school consistently. It’s difficult for the teacher and the class to build their skills and progress if a large number of students are frequently absent. In addition to falling behind in academics, students who are not in school on a regular basis are more likely to get into trouble with the law and cause problems in their communities.

A 2008 study conducted by the Rodel Community Scholars at Arizona State University that tracked students from kindergarten through high school found that dropout patterns were linked with poor attendance, beginning in kindergarten. Gregory Hickman, director of the Rodel Community Scholars program and former director of the Arizona Dropout Initiative, notes they discovered that as early as kindergarten, behavioral differences are apparent between those who go on to graduate and those who drop out, with dropouts missing an average of 124 days by eighth grade.

Regular school attendance yields a multitude of benefits. Below you will find just a few..........................

Achievement: San Diego Unified School District found that students who attended school regularly were more likely to pass reading and math assessments than students who didn’t attend school regularly.

Opportunity: For High School students, being in school every day gives them a chance to learn more about college and scholarship opportunities, and to take the important exams they need to build a successful academic record.

Learning what it means to be a Productive Citizen: Just by being present at school, your child is learning how to be a good citizen by participating in the school community, learning valuable social skills, and developing a broader world view.

The importance of education: Your commitment to school attendance will also send a message to your child that education is a priority for your family, going to school every day is a critical part of educational success, and that it’s important to take your responsibilities seriously — including going to school.

Gwendolyn H. Harris, Assistant Principal
Thank You, IHS Volunteers!

Everyone at Independence welcomed the opportunity to formally thank all the individuals and organizations who supported our students and staff throughout the year at our annual Your Just Desserts reception held April 25. Each act of volunteerism enriched the lives of students, faculty, support staff and administration and was very much appreciated.

Graduates’ Reflections

“I enjoyed my last year of High School here. It was more welcoming than my home school and the smaller classes helped a lot with my grades because the teachers had more time to focus on each student.”  

Adam, 2017

“My experience in Independence was honestly amazing. I loved it here. I had doubts about even coming here. I thought I would hate it and I would be kicked out the first week for bad attendance, but I’m still here & I love the teachers. They really support you and help you.”

Cynthia, 2017

“My experience has been pretty wonderful, Independence has given me a second chance at my education.”

Colin, 2017

“The experience I have had at this school is fabulous. I got the help I needed. The teachers never gave up on you. They made sure you did what you had to do.”

Kayleigh, 2017

“My experience at Independence High School has been very pleasant. I enjoyed the pace of each class, because I felt like I was almost always getting something done. The teachers and counselors were extremely helpful and it was motivating to have staff that wanted me to succeed and held me accountable. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Independence, and I am very thankful that it gave me the resources I needed to graduate early.”

Emily, 2016
Congratulations to the Mini-Semester IV Star Students! Nominated by their teachers for academic success, dedication to their studies and admirable character, these shining stars were joined by family and friends during a ceremony and reception in their honor on May 9:

Victoria Alexander
Nadya Bronson
Chantelle Christensen
Tristin Cook
Colin Davis
Lauren Diehl (2)
Gina DiPietro
Yonaton Escorsia-Gonzalez
Gabriela Gonzalez-Bittar
Emma Honeycutt
Jaqueline Jimenez-Campos
Edwin Ortiz
Liliana Perez
Brandon Scott
Danilo Velasco
Extracurricular News

Interact Blood Drive

The April 14 blood drive, held in conjunction with Life South Community Blood Centers, resulted in 31 pints of blood being donated. That number translates into the opportunity to save 93 lives. Together with the December donations, IHS Interact members gave hope for health to 213 individuals in our community.

Another Successful Year of Service

The IHS Interact Club continued its tradition of exceptional service to local, state and international organizations during the 2016-2017 school year.

Reaching beyond the walls of our school, the Independence chapter participated in:

- Can Do Drive
- 11 Alive Can-A-Thon
- Blood Drives—December and April
- Atlanta Heart Walk
- Clothes Drive in partnership with American Kidney Services, raising approximately $1600
- RYLA, Laws of Life Essay Contest
- Relay for Life, North Fulton—Received donations of $1010, contributed directly to the American Cancer Society
- Operation Oreos
- Atlanta Humane Society Walk
- Zimbabwe School Project (K-5 story books)
- Pennies for Patients

In-House Projects included:

- Green House
- Habitat for Humanity
- SADD
- Recycling
- Wrapping gifts for special events
- Graduation Duties
- Student Ambassadors
- T-shirt Design
- Printer Cartridge Recycling in partnership with Office Depot

For information about Interact at Independence, please contact Ms. Gaganjot Singh or Ms. Linda Legros.

It is the policy of the Fulton County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability in any employment practice, educational program, or any other program, activity, or service. If you wish to make a complaint or request accommodation or modification due to discrimination in any program, activity, or service, contact Chief Compliance Officer, Ron Wade, 6201 Powers Ferry Rd, Atlanta, Georgia 30339, or phone 470-254-3600. TTY 1-800-255-013
Congratulations, Class of 2017!

Graduating Seniors' Cookout

Final Instructions

Special Recognition

Honored Guests

Time to Celebrate

Only Moments Away

Volunteers From Alpharetta First Baptist Church

Inspiring the Next Generation
The annual North Fulton Retired Educators Association Scholarship Luncheon was held on May 17 at The North Point Diner in Alpharetta. Principal Taylor, Assistant Principal Harris and Ms. Tanya Ellis, Head Counselor, accompanied the four IHS students who were this year’s scholarship recipients.

Emily Venter, Independence Valedictorian, and Vincent Makambi each received a $500 NFREA scholarship. Emma Honeycutt was awarded the Jeane L. Boyer Scholarship and Annie Kim, IHS Salutatorian, received the Ms. Sammie Flaherty Scholarship.

“I enjoyed my experience at Independence. I have never been to a school like Indo and I highly recommend this school to any and everyone that wants a more individualized high school experience. I like that everyone here has one goal, to graduate.”  

Elizabeth, 2017

“I loved it so much. To be honest, I completed so much in so little time I wish I would have done this sooner. But my experience here has been amazing with the teachers, students, and staff. I'm going to miss it.”

Josiah, 2017

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<td><strong>Emma Honeycutt</strong></td>
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