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September 2016

Dear St. Michaels University School Parent:

I would like to congratulate you on choosing St. Michaels University School, a member of Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS).

A study published by the Fraser Institute in July reported that Canada is home to just under 2,000 independent schools. You should know that only 90 of these commit to meeting the 12 National Standards of CAIS. I am often asked why there are not more CAIS schools. The answer is simple.

St. Michaels University School, like all CAIS schools, has made a decision to go above and beyond the provincial requirements and seek out the highest international standards in all areas of program and operations. All schools are busy places, so this decision requires a focused commitment to take the time to research best practices, reflect on areas of strength and opportunity, and then be open to a peer review. Most independent schools cannot or have chosen not to make this commitment. But CAIS schools not only meet the rigorous CAIS standards but are committed to and strive for constant improvement.

When I tour our CAIS schools, I am continually impressed by the passion for learning – both the students and the faculty are authentic in their desire to learn. These are inspirational communities! As a parent, I challenge you to ask your children's teachers what they learned this summer, and I promise you will hear about great books and programs that will help to provide a great year for the students. Our CAIS Leadership Institute alone welcomed over 200 faculty from 50 schools this July – how amazing to see such a commitment to cutting-edge educational research, and this was during a heat wave!

Something else strikes me when I tour our CAIS schools. I have recently become acquainted with the work of the [Search Institute](#), and its work on the developmental relationships framework. There are 20 actions that make a relationship developmental. You can read all about this on the Institute's website, but for now, consider the five categories of actions:

1. Express care
2. Challenge growth
3. Provide support
4. Share power
5. Expand possibilities

Our schools are full of passionate teachers who develop positive relationships with students. They go above and beyond to improve the way students learn. What always impresses me most is the efforts our teachers take to make all of our students feel welcomed, inspired and loved. I am using that last word very intentionally, knowing that it is a powerful word. When I tour our schools and see the connections between students and teachers and staff members, I see love. That is a real differentiator that makes CAIS schools outstanding.

Our world needs more of these deep connections between people. Technology is shaping the way we understand the world – from Pokémon GO, and the rise in online educational opportunities, to using technology to help children learn and

flourish in our schools. Our CAIS schools believe in being reflective and intentional when using technology, understand that technology is a complement to education and learning, not an end in itself, and strive to prevent technology from interfering with deep people connections.

The combination – of technology and innovation, with a community of passionate learners who know each student individually, and a celebration of history and traditions – makes St. Michaels University School special.

You have a choice of where to send your child, and sending your child to a CAIS school is a major decision. I hope that you feel you have made the right investment in your choice of school, so that you are true partners in raising children who go on to pursue their passions and become a positive force in the world.

I wish you and your family the very best for this academic year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "AmKee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anne-Marie Kee
CAIS Executive Director