

JASON LEWIS WALTON

June 26, 2017

Prep Family,

Do you have a favorite movie? I do... Close friends of mine will quickly tell you that my favorite movie of all time is *Ferris Beuller's Day Off*. I think the reason I like it so much is that it captures the essence of why high school is such a singular and special time in all of our lives. Serving as Head of School at Jackson Prep for the last three years, for me, has been exactly that: a singular and special time.

In the taxi scene near the end of the film, Ferris asks, "Cameron, what have you seen today?" and then he goes on to rattle off the amazing experiences they've had. That's the way I feel about our time together. It has been EPIC and just like Ferris in the taxi, I wanted to briefly recount for you what we have experienced and accomplished together:

We traveled to best-in-class schools all over the country to ignite our thinking and then used that inspiration to launch an aggressive strategic Plan: #PrepJourney: A Roadmap to the Future of Your Education. We executed a seamless and successful reaccreditation effort. We became the first school in the state to achieve Google Certification for all instructional staff. We partnered with higher ed institutions to expand dual enrollment opportunities and we even brokered some very innovative tuition exchange programs. We opened up extracurricular offerings with equestrian sports, sporting clays, fly fishing, etc... We elevated our external presence substantially here in our area. We expanded alumni outreach through Prep tailgates at area college football games and Prep on the Road stops in cities all over. We made a big commitment to Diversity naming the first Chief Diversity Officer in Prep's history. We brought some very healthy food options into the dining commons through our #FarmToPrep initiative. We have seen enrollment climb every year and annual giving will be stronger by year end than at anytime in the last ten years. We launched the first virtual campus tour by any independent school in the state. We have made investments in college counseling and those dividends paid off quickly with an eye-popping \$105k in scholarship offers per senior. And to top it all off, we were named Best Private School, home to Best Teacher and Best Place to Work (finalist) by readers of the Clarion Ledger.

None of these are my accomplishments. They are 100% yours. Schools and their achievements are the work of many, many hands and I hope you feel as proud as I do about the time we have had with one another. Thank you for letting me elevate and share your accomplishments. With that said, I wanted to share that I will not stay on as Head of School at Jackson Prep. It is unfortunate, but I was unable reach agreement on matters related to my upcoming contract renewal.

I would be remiss if I did not express my deep appreciation for the privilege this opportunity has been for me professionally and personally. We will always feel a deep and abiding love for this school and community and we have certainly felt that love reciprocated, particularly this spring, when I experienced the loss of both my parents. They added greatly to the "tug of home" when we decided to return to Mississippi in 2014. The opportunity to have been near them both these last years has honestly been the greatest blessing of all and I am earnest when I tell you that I am forever indebted. On behalf of Laurie, Caroline and John William and myself, please accept our sincere, best wishes for the next chapter at Prep.

Sincerely,

JLW