



April 26, 2021

Dear Belmont Hill Parents,

As we now enter spring on campus with five days of on campus learning, I am excited to share news from the first stages of our Campus Master Planning process. With my own family moving to a home across the street last June, we were able to utilize the Howe House this year to the benefit of our Boarding program. Next year, we plan to begin the year with all boarders back into the Speare and Underwood Houses in compliance with all state guidelines. The Campus Master Plan now calls for the Main Office, including the Head of School Office, to move to the first floor of the Howe House this summer. This will provide a location more closely connected to the academic quad while also providing a link to the historical nature of the building. The School's Business Office will also move to the second floor of the Howe House, creating departmental synergy and freeing up their current space for additional faculty housing in the future.

Perhaps more importantly for the boys, this shift provides the opportunity for us to transition Bolles House into a wonderful redesigned Makerspace for the community to enjoy. We will begin this renovation right after graduation with the goal of opening the space upon our return in the fall. We expect the main floor to include a dedicated training area for a robotics team, which boys will be able to access in a number of ways next year. This main floor will be able to function as two separate spaces or one larger space and will be incredibly flexible, housing a number of cutting-edge tools for making. The hope is that this room offers a space for boys to create, design, pursue engineering activities, and display and present their work in new and innovative ways. It will be joined with a new podcasting and Green Room across the Bolles Corridor, and we are eager to see how the boys and our faculty choose to use both spaces over time.

I am even more thrilled that we have been able to hire a new Director of Makerspace, Matthew Ziff, who will come to us having overseen an even larger space at City College in New York City. A graduate of Blair Academy and the University of Miami, Matt has deep experience overseeing the related equipment, work in robotics, and in helping to make projects come alive for both students and faculty. We are excited to welcome him to Belmont Hill as an advisor and faculty member this fall.

The Strategic Vision document for Belmont Hill that was presented to me during my search process called for new ways to strengthen STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) options for the boys at Belmont Hill. When we consider some of our recent offerings – such as our Biomedical Design course through Johns Hopkins as well as continued refinement of our traditional science coursework – we are making good progress. The centrally located Makerspace should serve as a catalyst to advanced interdisciplinary projects that will allow our boys to innovate in novel ways. While we know this smaller project does not represent the final investment by Belmont Hill in this area, creating this modern physical sandbox for our boys and faculty will allow us to design and play in new ways.

A small number of parents and alumni have made this project possible through remarkable generosity. I have been so humbled by this incredible support, as well as the desire of our Board to keep moving forward during challenging times. My hope is that this happy announcement creates even more enthusiasm for the fall of 2021, which we trust will also come with a school experience that will be more familiar to our boys than the past eighteen months.

For now, we focus upon delivering the best possible spring experience we can for our seniors and the entire community. As always, thank you for your amazing support.

Sincerely yours,

Gregory J. Schneider
Ronald M. Druker '62 Head of School