

The Lawrenceville School

WAR IN UKRAINE

March 2, 2022

Dear Lawrenceville Community,

On February 24th, after months of buildup on the border, Russian military operations began within the sovereign nation of Ukraine. Hours after hostilities commenced, our campus Chapel bells rang with a prayer for peace and hope.

The following day, when it was clear that significant military action was underway, again our Chapel bells rang out, this time playing the Ukrainian national anthem, "Ukraine Has Not Yet Perished."

In the ensuing days, we have sent out information to our community on fund raisers, reminded our students of the counseling support available as they process the grim realities of war, posted notices on social media, and most recently, our History Department will gather today with students, as Department Chair Marisa Hedges says, "...to create a space for you to ask questions and unpack what is on your mind and in your heart as you try to navigate this difficult moment."

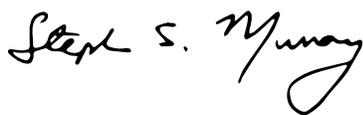
Last night, in his State of the Union address, President Biden drew bipartisan support for his statements on the invasion and his intent to "send an unmistakable signal to Ukraine and to the world." Indeed, nations across Europe and around the globe have rallied in a show of solidarity, and this should give us hope.

In my Convocation remarks at the start of this school year, I spoke about the importance of hope. We heard quite clearly this past Sunday at our Town Hall that we have much to work on as a community, but as I reminded you in September, "...what we do here is important." You are in a community that listens, and cares, and works every day to live up to its ideals, even if imperfectly at times - the point is, we stand for something. "We have here some of the very best teachers anywhere...who work tirelessly to develop some of the very brightest, most promising hearts and minds that can be gathered in one place. And I see this as our purpose: to equip our young people to go off into the world with a clear-eyed sense of hope, and the tools of empathy, compassion, and understanding in order to make it a better place."

Part of our strength as an institution derives from our ability to stand together, support each other, and nurture our collective hope, a hope based on our belief in the value of each individual and their place in a good and just society.

Today we focus on the dire plight of the Ukrainian people, and this situation is a clear reminder that our democratic ideals are not quaint notions but powerful defenses against dictatorial impulses and tyranny. More than ever, the vision statement for our current strategic plan remains starkly relevant: "Our world urgently needs Lawrenceville's responsible leaders, committed problem solvers, and thoughtful innovators who seek to make a difference." In the days and weeks ahead, let us keep this "higher purpose," to echo our mission, in mind.

Sincerely,



Stephen S. Murray H'54 '55 '65 '16 P'16 '21
The Shelby Cullom Davis '26 Head of School

