

Dear Members of the Visitation Academy Community,

One of the strategic initiatives for the 2011-2012 school year was to engage in a comprehensive study of the use of time, not only during the school day but also from the opening days prior to the official start of the school year through the closing faculty meeting in the spring. Visitation Academy contracted with a consultant from Independent School Management (ISM) to conduct a study of our daily schedules and yearly calendar, and to make recommendations to align with current best practices.

In the course of the on-site visit in September, 2011, the Consultant analyzed the design and loading of the schedule, the sequencing of academics, crossover faculty alternatives, a variety of options for flexibility, and possible ways to eliminate stressful elements. Upon completion of this analysis, ISM provided a report with recommendations for consideration. The Upper School Schedule Committee has been meeting to study the report and to develop plans for implementing those recommendations that can be put into place next year. These areas under review include calendar considerations, academic requirements, and the daily schedule.

As a result, the “Calendar Highlights 2012-2013” reflects several recommendations from the ISM Consultant after his thorough analysis of our schedules and calendar:

- To increase instructional time, we will pilot an “AP preseason” for the AP English, AP Calculus AB, AP Biology, and AP U.S. History classes a week before regular classes begin. The daily schedule for these classes will be structured to avoid conflicts with fall sports practices.
- While more than 100 students (and numerous faculty members) are involved in Carnival set-up and clean-up and regular classes cannot be held, there are many students and teachers who can be engaging in curricular programs such as class retreats. For 2012-2013, the 7th and 8th grade retreats are scheduled on the Carnival set-up day and the 9th and 10th grade retreats are scheduled on the Carnival clean-up day. Scheduling the retreats at this time preserves instructional time for when regular classes can be held, and allows more teachers to participate in the retreats with their students.
- Additionally, please note that the first day of Upper School Parent-Teacher Conferences will be a full-day of school.

There will be more, less obvious, instances of preserving instructional time throughout the year.

Thank you for your understanding as we continue to work toward implementation of the consultant’s recommendations to make the school calendar more efficient and effective and the daily schedule more supportive of the academic program. We believe these efforts will help Visitation Academy continue its tradition of excellence in scholarship, spirituality, leadership, and service. Most importantly, these recommendations have been implemented because we strongly believe in the long-term benefits to our students through increased flexibility and decreased stress in their daily schedules.

Attachment: 2012-2013 Calendar Highlights

