



DUCHESNE HIGH SCHOOL

shaping leaders in mind, body, and spirit

Hello all,

Last week, I returned to campus from my three week “academic retreat” at Notre Dame to find a very animated Mr. Schneider extolling the virtues *The Anxious Generation*, the book we will be reading this year in Duchesne Reads. He stressed, “every parent needs to read this book!” And Mr. Schneider is not alone. Jonathan Haidt’s study of Gen Z is stirring up a good deal of conversation around the country. With the rest of my letter, I’ll reintroduce the book in the hopes of encouraging many of you to join us on August 27th at 6:30 for our first meeting. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Robyn Fuchs (rfuchs@duchesne-hs.org).

This year, **Duchesne Reads** will be discussing [The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness](#). I came across Haidt’s book while compiling my personal reading list for the summer. Haidt argues that generations are not defined by years or decades, but by significant changes to the culture. The change that shapes people born after 1995, according to Haidt, is the advent of the smart phone, especially those phones defined by fast internet connectivity and a front-facing camera.

In his introduction Haidt writes, “Gen Z became the first generation in history to go through puberty with a portal in their pockets that called them away from the people nearby and into an alternative universe that was exciting, addictive, unstable, and unsuitable for children and adolescents. Succeeding socially in that universe required them to devote a large part of their consciousness—perpetually—to managing what became their online brand.” He then goes on to discuss the flip side of living in a virtual world, “They spent far less time playing with, talking to, touching, or even making eye contact with their friends and families, thereby reducing their participation in embodied social behaviors that are essential for successful human development.”

I know that sounds bleak, but Haidt also offers up simple and interesting solutions. These solutions, however, require collective action on the part of families, schools, and communities. It is my hope that we could get together as a community to discuss Haidt’s ideas and solutions, and see what might work for Duchesne. The first meeting of **Duchesne Reads** will be on August 27th at 6:30. At that time, I’d like to discuss the introduction and the first 4 chapters. I hope you’ll join us. If you are planning on attending, please let Robyn Fuchs know (rfuchs@duchesne-hs.org).

Enjoy the rest of summer, and we’ll see you soon,

Dominic D’Urso



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Changes Around Campus

Facilities:

We continue to improve our facilities. This summer we are working to update many of our classrooms, and we plan to have all of the classrooms updates by the end of next summer.

New Teachers:

We will be welcoming three new teachers to the Duchesne staff this year: Terri Fisher-Reed (English), Brad Benne '03 (Science), and Tim Mueth (Business). I'm sure we will have much longer introductions once we begin the year. If you see them around campus, please make them feel welcome.

Handbooks:



The Parent/Student and Co-curricular handbooks for the 2024-2025 school year are now available on our webpage. Most of the changes from last year's handbooks are minor and have to do with wording. We have also made a change to our grading scale. Starting with the Fall 2024 semester, Duchesne will use the 10 point grading scale. We are doing so to clarify our scale and to be more consistent with most colleges and universities. You can see the full grading scale in our [Parent/Student Handbook](#).

Upcoming Events

July 29 or 30

Technology Orientation: Students new to Duchesne will get the information they need to use the technology at our school. Look for the email from Mrs. Choinka for more details.

August 7 & 8

Senior Retreat: Seniors will go on an overnight retreat at the White House Retreat center located along the bluffs of the Mississippi River. They need to be at school by 7:40 on Wednesday and will return late Thursday afternoon. Ms. Tigges, Mrs. Broyles, and Mr. Berner will accompany the seniors on their retreat.



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August 12 & 13

Senior Parking Lot Days: Seniors have the opportunity to decorate their parking spots. All students of driving age should be looking out for an email about parking spaces from Mr. Schneider.

August 12

First Day of Fall Sports: Please make sure that your student has completed all of the necessary forms, including a sports physical. Times for practices will vary. Contact your head coach for more details.

August 13

Freshmen Family Mass: The mass will be held on campus in our PAC at 6:00 in the evening. A reception will follow. We will celebrate as a class the beginning of high school. We encourage our students to dress up for this event. An invitation flyer will be sent out soon.

August 14

Freshmen and New Student Orientation: Orientation is a full day event, in which students will be inducted into their Houses and get an introduction to life as a Duchesne student. The day begins like most of our days at 7:40. It will conclude like most of our days at 2:50. This will be an active day, so students should dress in shorts, t-shirts, and tennis shoes. We encourage you to bring a bottle of water and to leave you iPad at home. Lunch will be provided.

August 15

First Day of School: All classes will meet. We will start at 7:40 and end at 12:05.

Freshmen Parent Social Media Orientation: The Secondary Schools Coalition in conjunction with West County Psychological talk to our Freshmen parents about some of the experiences their students will face in high school. The presentation begins at 6:00 in the PAC.

August 19

Picture Day: Our photography company will be on site to take yearbook and student ID pictures.



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August 21

Wednesday Late Start: Almost every Wednesday is a late start. School begins at 9:10 and ends at 2:50. The only exceptions are our exam days and Ash Wednesday.

August 22

New Family and Sports BBQ: For parents with students playing a fall sport, the evening begins at 5:00 with a brief introduction followed by individual sports meetings. A BBQ dinner follows at 6:00 and all parents new to Duchesne are asked to join. After the dinner, the administration will run through a fairly quick “Duchesne 101” course, providing families with some basic information about how the school operates. This event is for parents, not students.

Looking Ahead (More Details Soon)

August 27

Duchesne Reads: See the letter above.

August 29

Back to School Night

September 2

Labor Day: No School

September 12

Our First All School Mass

September 28

Homecoming Dance