

April 7th, 2017

Dear DVS Family,

When I was in 6th grade my family moved to a new home, and I remember having a lot of conflicting feelings about it. I was leaving what was familiar to me - my neighborhood, the friends on my street, my school, and the comfort of the home I had lived since I was born. Even though I knew that our new place was better than the old one, I had a lot of questions and anxiety about it and it took me some time before I felt like that new house was really my home. While not everything about that transition was easy for me or for my family, the challenges were worth it because it was a good change for all of us.

And now we, the DVS family, are about to make the biggest change in *our* history: moving into a brand-new, 160-million-dollar home! Everything about this building, from the layout of the floorplan to the colors of the carpet and chairs, was custom designed specifically for our school. It's an historic time in the life of our school and, like everything else we do here, we want to be thoughtful and intentional about doing this move well. We have been carefully planning and preparing for years for this, with the goal of preserving the greatness and uniqueness of our DVS family culture while growing our program with all of the opportunities that our beautiful new campus gives us.

One of the things that makes this transition unique is that we're moving into a building along with two other schools, and there aren't many examples of three different schools moving into one building together. Most importantly, we are not "merging" with the other two Da Vinci high schools and becoming one big high school, and we are not changing our name to "Wiseburn High School". We will still be Da Vinci Science High School, with all of our unique traditions and expectations and culture and ways of doing things differently.

The DVS culture is precious to all of us, and that culture ultimately depends on you. It's in the way you are with each other, being accepting and kind and willing to thoughtfully assume each other's best intentions and sort things out when they are difficult. It's in the way you are with your teachers, trusting them as supporters who believe in you and who want the best for you. It's in the way you take pride in doing quality work, collaborate in groups, give and receive feedback, and make each draft of your work better than the last. It's in the way you take care of our school, from caring for the technology you use in class to throwing your trash away at the end of lunch. It's in the way you are with visitors and guests, greeting them cheerfully and articulately explaining what you are doing in your classes and answering their questions about the school. It's even in the way that lost phones and laptops and backpacks are found and turned in. **We love the way that you take care of this school and this family!**

As we learned when we read “Who Moved My Cheese” (while eating string cheese!) together in first semester, change is a consistent feature of our lives, and we are most successful when we embrace the change and adapt quickly to new circumstances while holding fast to our core values and principles. It is really important for us to remember that no family is perfect (our DVS family included!), and that as different school families we are mindful and respectful of each other.

It may help to imagine your own family moving into the second floor of a new building, and your extended family moving into the 3rd and 4th floors of that building. You’d be living closer to your cousins and aunts and uncles and you’d get to see them more often, but your immediate family wouldn’t change. You can think of the students at DV Communications and DV Design like your Da Vinci “cousins” - you’ll be living closer to them and we’ll be a part of an extended family, but just like at home, each family will have different norms and expectations and ways of doing things.

We, the adults who support you in your journey here at DVS, are looking forward to making the adventure of this transition along with you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stan".