

# Ascension Episcopal School

*Inspired to achieve.*

Gator Bytes!



September 16, 2011

Dear AES Families,

I have written to you before about the value proposition of the AES educational experience. A significant aspect of that value proposition is student preparation for the rigors of college work. There is abundant anecdotal evidence to support this position but there is other, more objective, evidence as well. Here is one brief example.

An article published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported on a survey of college and university faculty members on the topic of student preparation. Broadly, faculty members felt that incoming “students are inadequate writers, have trouble understanding difficult materials, fall short in knowledge of science and math, have poor study habits, and lack motivation.” A professor at a public university here in Louisiana observed that, “students don’t know how to study, how to organize and retain the information, or how to apply it.” Eighty-four percent of the respondents found high school graduates not well prepared for college-level work. Fifty-four percent found their writing skills to be weak. An English professor in Pennsylvania stated: “In composition, students are usually unaware of what it takes to write even a four- to five-page essay every two or three weeks.”

These are *precisely* the areas in which good independent schools like AES excel. Our graduates, far more often than their counterparts at other kinds of schools, are confident communicators, effective writers, possess good study habits, and are strongly motivated. These qualities and capabilities are being taught and built upon in *every grade* at Ascension Episcopal School. There is, moreover, no distinction between the *values* you embrace in your homes and the *values* that are upheld and nurtured at AES.

In terms of competitive markets, one of the most stark contrasts to be found is that between a public school and an independent school education. Public schools are free. Good independent schools, like AES, are anything but free! However, whenever you are asked why you send your children to AES instead of a free or much less expensive alternative, I believe that you can say with confidence, “I get what I pay for.”

Patience Rewarded. I’m aware that many of you have experienced acute frustrations with the FACTS mechanism. The good news is that I, our business manager, Tracy Troxclair, and the Finance Committee agree with you. Though I can’t tell you now what structure will be in place for the next school year, I can tell you that it will be far more user friendly than the present system. Thank you for your patience.

And thank you for your continuing confidence and trust in Ascension Episcopal School.

Geaux Gators!



Lee Cox  
Interim Headmaster