Dear Campus School Families:

I should begin by acknowledging the squirrel buzz. Thank you for the many comments, questions, and chuckles.

On Tuesday night we held our first Parent Advisory Council meeting. The role of PAC will be to provide support, advice, counsel, and creative inspiration for how we move forward as a school community. We had 25 parents volunteer to serve on the committee. In an effort to be inclusive, we divided the group into two separate entities. Each group will meet every other month. We began the meeting by having each person introduce describe the ‘story’ of why and how their family chose the Campus School. This was a fascinating session for me as it helped me understand what parents find important about our school. I would categorize the responses into four categories:

• I wanted my children to be part of a community where learning involves exploration, inquiry, and creative expression.
• It was important to me for my child to be in a community where he or she is deeply known.
• I value the Campus School’s emphasis on challenging academics integrated into a curriculum that lifts up the arts, music, movement, and play.

The fourth quality that parents emphasized involved the opportunities provided because of the Campus Schools connection to Smith. In a prior email I talked about the many programmatic relationships that we have such as the use of the art museum. Parents mentioned this, but the also described how one of the Campus School’s most unique assets involves the many Smith students that work, volunteer, or undertake projects at the school. This semester, for example, we have 62 Smith students that work at the school in a variety of capacities. I didn’t know this number until we counted after the meeting. It is a truly astonishing number of students that work alongside the faculty and staff. These students provide a range of supports: tutoring, reading stories during lunch, working as crossing guards, supervising recess, and supporting small groups of learners.

Aside from the specific roles they play at the school, they also infuse the school with an energy fueled by their idealism. They are excited to be part of a school and the project of education. They also bring challenging questions anchored in the readings and discussions they are having in their Smith College courses and a playfulness bubbling up from their delight in being an elementary school. All of these elements—as one the advisory board member said—contribute to what makes the Campus School special.

We also heard that parents see Smith students working at the school, but they often have little contact or context to understand why they are there and what they do. It struck me as an important observation. Other than the introductory display in the lobby of the 14 student teachers, we do not have a system for describing the other roles that Smith students play in your children’s life and work at the Campus School. In that spirit, I thought it would be useful to profile several other Smith students who contribute to the educational mission of our school. This is just a short snapshot of three typical students in their own words.

Alison Tammaro—After school and Wednesday Teacher

I’m in my first semester of my junior year at Smith College where I’m majoring in math. I transferred here last year from Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA. However, I originally hail from Uxbridge, MA. I went to high school at a Quaker school in Providence, RI. During the summers I work as a camp counselor at a Girl Scout Camp.

Here at the Campus School I work mostly working with second grade. Tuesdays and Thursdays I work with second grade as a lunch aide where I read to the students while they eat and help them transition into working periods or independent reading. I also sometimes work one on one with students to assess
and develop their fluency in reading. On Mondays and Thursdays I work with the second and third grade after school program with Ms. Ducharme. I help facilitate games, play with children, and supervise group projects. On Wednesdays, I work with Ms. Schmalz and the second grade group in the after school program.

My experience working at the Campus School has been both enjoyable and helpful. I'm aspiring to be a math teacher and while Smith has been educating me about calculus and number theory, I believe that only experience will teach me the best ways in which to interact with students and help facilitate learning. Being in such a wide variety of environments throughout the week has taught me quite a bit about how a classroom works and how many moving parts go into the education of elementary school aged children. The campus school also provides opportunities for me to learn about other facets of education. For example, in my multicultural education class, we have been learning about how to incorporate multiculturalism into various classes to help students become critical thinkers. Mr. Weiner shared how he uses diverse narratives to teach history. Learning about practice, by teachers like Mr. Weiner is so valuable.

**Anuujin Elbegdorj – Assistant Technology Teacher**

Hi! My name is Anuujin Elbegdorj and currently I work as a classroom aide for Mary Ann Dassatti in the technology room. This is my second year working with students in the technology room. As an international student from Mongolia, working at a school that is incorporated into the heart of the Education and Child Study Department at Smith College has been an incredible opportunity for me.

In Mongolia, I went to an international high school but worked very closely with children that were in the government funded orphanages. My family and I grew to love them and my mother started a foundation in which we “adopted” twenty children and took them under our care. Spending time with these kids exposed me to the very real struggles of the Mongolian education system and pioneered my academics at Smith College to be education and child studies orientated.

At the Smith College Campus School I've had the opportunity to make obstacle courses for robot programming, helped with claymation animation film making and other amazing projects. These projects seem unique to the campus school and I find myself being challenged everyday by the teachers and students. Coming from my background and other experiences, this opportunity to work at the campus school is special and I'm happy to be working here!

Now that I'm in my third year at Smith, I’ve had the opportunity to partake in the Urban Education Initiative and work with urban students at Springfield, MA, enjoy a summer with CitySprouts teaching urban students about environment and food sustainability in urban school gardens and now have this amazing opportunity to work at a laboratory school right on campus.

**Katherine Badger: Teacher in the Wednesday Program**

My name is Katherine Badger, I'm a senior at Smith College and originally from Jackson, NH. I came to Smith knowing that I wanted to become an Education and Child Study major and I was drawn to Smith because of the Campus School and Fort Hill. During sophomore year I worked in the kindergarten and the after school program. Last year I was abroad in Italy for the year and participated in the Pistoia program, a preschool internship in a town outside of Florence, studying the Pistoia approach and learning about space and design. This year I am continuing this study with Professor Etheredge and we are doing a study of the space and design of classrooms.

Thanks,