

## Lessons Learned from MGS

As most of you know, this is my first year to serve as director of MGS. Normally, class night is reserved for showcasing what the scholars have learned, but I thought you might enjoy hearing what you, the scholars, have taught me:

I've learned that when quirky people find other quirky people, we discover we're normal, after all – what is normal?

I've learned that three weeks is not such a long time after all.

I've learned that with a great co-parent (thanks Dana!) having 98 kids is not half bad.

I've learned that “Lights Out” means different things to different people.

I've learned that Ramen, Pizza, and Gummy Bears are their own food groups.

I've learned that a blow dryer can set off the alarm system for an entire dorm.

I've learned that it's pointless to try to do anything serious while wearing a toga.

I've learned that the best week to do laundry in a guy's dorm is the first week. After that, it's risky.

I've learned that contrary to popular belief, sleep is just a perk, not a necessity.

I've learned how to play “the game” and “little Sally Walker”.

I've learned that it really is true: swimming within 2 hours of eating causes vomiting.

I've learned that teenagers today don't wear watches. They rely on cell phones for the time. Note to self: next year add "watch" to the "what to pack" list (maybe in place of the somewhat odd "don't bring bow and arrows line").

I've learned that you can survive on pasta and broccoli. And I've learned that if you want to get sweet tea, you need to get to the cafeteria early.

I've learned that I need to build time in the schedule for at least three clothing changes per day.

I've learned that if you give people a choice of church or sleeping in on Sundays, at least 60% will choose church.

I've learned that you really get what an affirmation is. And you know how to give them.

I've learned that most of you really didn't even want to come to MGS. Your parents made you do it. And I've learned that now you're glad you did.

I've learned that the rest of the world could take a lesson or two from Mississippi youth on acceptance, tolerance, friendship, and love.

I've learned that a group of people willing to serve can make a huge difference in 4 hours on a Saturday.

I've learned about courage, about perseverance, about resilience, about facing challenges, about reaching out, about friendship, about community.

I've learned that the leadership of tomorrow is truly before us today. And that they are committed, passionate, and fully capable.

I've learned that this program changes lives. I've learned what the Mississippi Governor's School Program is all about.

Thank you, scholars, for teaching me so much.