

Dear Families,

La Salle takes pride in being a college preparatory school of academic excellence and to that end, we believe that it is important for our students to be well read. Therefore, the English Department would like to encourage you to have your son read this summer. We recommend that students read at least one book prior to their return to school in the fall. Many students have a favorite author or would like to take this opportunity to challenge themselves in reading a literary classic. However, for those students who may struggle to find a book that they will enjoy, we are including a suggested reading list in this letter for grades 9-12. Please know that reading, whether a novel, a newspaper, a favorite magazine or one of our recommended books, is critical in developing the vocabulary and critical thinking skills necessary for success in high school, college and beyond.

For those students taking AP Literature & Composition, there is a separate, specific assignment posted on the web site. Please refer to that assignment. You may disregard the recommendations in this letter.

Summer Reading Suggestions for grades 9-12:

**\*\*\*The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell**

The tipping point is that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire. Just as a single sick person can start an epidemic of the flu, so too can a small but precisely targeted push cause a fashion trend, the popularity of a new product, or a drop in the crime rate. This widely acclaimed bestseller, in which Malcolm Gladwell explores and brilliantly illuminates the tipping point phenomenon, is already changing the way people throughout the world think about selling products and disseminating ideas.

\*\*\*Highly recommended for those students who are taking 11th grade honors English.

**\*\*\*The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch**

A lot of professors give talks titled "The Last Lecture." Professors are asked to consider their demise and to ruminate on what matters most to them. And while they speak, audiences can't help but mull the same question: What wisdom would we impart to the world if we knew it was our last chance? If we had to vanish tomorrow, what would we want as our legacy? When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn't have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer.

\*\*\*Great choice for seniors who will be taking 12R or 12H as they begin their last year of high school and prepare to embark on their life journeys.

### **The Maze Runner by James Dashner**

When Thomas wakes up in the lift, the only thing he can remember is his name. He's surrounded by strangers—boys whose memories are also gone.

Outside the towering stone walls that surround them is a limitless, ever-changing maze. It's the only way out—and no one's ever made it through alive.

Then a girl arrives. The first girl ever. And the message she delivers is terrifying: Remember. Survive. Run.

### **I Feel Like Going On: Life, Game, and Glory by Daniel Paisner and Ray Lewis**

“In this *New York Times* bestselling memoir, Ray Lewis—legendary Baltimore Ravens linebacker and one of the greatest defensive players of his generation—holds nothing back on the state of football as well as his troubled childhood, his rise to athletic greatness, the storm that threatened to ruin his NFL career, and the devastating injury that nearly cost him a final moment of glory.”

### **Tyrell by Coe Booth**

Tyrell is a young African-American teen who can't get a break. He's living (for now) with his spaced-out mother and little brother in a homeless shelter. His father's in jail. His girlfriend supports him, but he doesn't feel good enough for her -- and seems to be always on the verge of doing the wrong thing around her. There's another girl at the homeless shelter who is also after him, although the desires there are complicated. Tyrell feels he needs to score some money to make things better. Will he end up following in his father's footsteps?

### **The Rule of Four by Ian Caldwell and Dustin Thomason**

Princeton. Good Friday, 1999. On the eve of graduation, two friends are a hairsbreadth from solving the mysteries of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, a Renaissance text that has baffled scholars for centuries. Famous for its hypnotic power over those who study it, the five-hundred-year-old *Hypnerotomachia* may finally reveal its secrets to Tom Sullivan, whose father was obsessed with the book, and Paul Harris, whose future depends on it. As the deadline looms, research has stalled until a vital clue is unearthed: a long-lost diary that may prove to be the key to deciphering the ancient text. But when a longtime student of the book is murdered just hours later, a chilling cycle of deaths and revelations begins one that will force Tom and Paul into a fiery drama, spun from a book whose power and meaning have long been misunderstood.

### **Friday Night Lights: A Town, a Team, and a Dream by H.G. Bissinger**

Return once again to the enduring account of life in the Mojo lane, to the Permian Panthers of Odessa -- the winningest high school football team in Texas history. Odessa is not known to be a town big on dreams, but the Panthers help keep the hopes and dreams of this small, dusty town going. Socially and racially divided, its fragile economy follows the treacherous boom-bust path of the oil business. In bad times, the unemployment rate barrels out of control; in good times, its

murder rate skyrockets. But every Friday night from September to December, when the Permian High School Panthers play football, this West Texas town becomes a place where dreams can come true. With frankness and compassion, Bissinger chronicles one of the Panthers' dramatic seasons and shows how single-minded devotion to the team shapes the community and inspires-and sometimes shatters-the teenagers who wear the Panthers' uniforms.

**Eight Men Out: The Black Sox and the 1919 World Series by Eliot Asinof**

The headlines proclaimed the 1919 fix of the World Series and attempted cover-up as "the most gigantic sporting swindle in the history of America!" First published in 1963, *Eight Men Out* has become a timeless classic. Eliot Asinof has reconstructed the entire scene-by-scene story of the fantastic scandal in which eight Chicago White Sox players arranged with the nation's leading gamblers to throw the Series in Cincinnati. Mr. Asinof vividly describes the tense meetings, the hitches in the conniving, the actual plays in which the Series was thrown, the Grand Jury indictment, and the famous 1921 trial. Moving behind the scenes, he perceptively examines the motives and backgrounds of the players and the conditions that made the improbable fix all too possible. Here, too, is a graphic picture of the American underworld that managed the fix, the deeply shocked newspapermen who uncovered the story, and the war-exhausted nation that turned with relief and pride to the Series, only to be rocked by the scandal. Far more than a superbly told baseball story, this is a compelling slice of American history in the aftermath of World War I and at the cusp of the Roaring Twenties.

**What Was Asked of Us: An Oral History of the Iraq War by the Soldiers Who Fought It by Trish Wood (Author), Bobby Muller (Contributor)**

The Iraq war officially began on March 20, 2003, and since then more than one million young Americans have rotated through the country's insurgent-infested hot spots. But although stories of dramatic ambushes and attacks dominate the front pages of newspapers, most of us do not truly know what the war is like for the Americans who fight it. *What Was Asked of Us* helps us bridge that gap. The in-depth and intensely probing interviews this book brings together document the soldiers' experiences and darkest secrets, offering a multitude of authentic, unfiltered voices - at times raw and emotional, at other times eloquent and lyrical. These voices walk us through the war, from the successful push to Baghdad, through the erroneous "Mission Accomplished" moment, and into the dangerous, murky present.

**The Things A Brother Knows by Dana Reinhardt**

"Levi's older brother Boaz returns from fighting with the Marines in the Middle East. He's safe. Levi's family has waited three long years for this. But Boaz is no longer the brother Levi thought he knew. Even if nobody else wants to see it, Levi can tell that Boaz has changed; something's wrong. When Boaz announces he's off to hike the Appalachian Trail, Levi knows he's lying. He's heading somewhere else. So Levi follows, determined to understand who his brother was, what he's been through, and how to bring him home again."

**Foul Trouble by John Feinstein**

Terrell Jamerson is the #1 high school basketball player in the country. His team is poised to win State, top colleges are lining up to give him scholarships, and everyone says he could play in the NBA tomorrow. But it only takes one false step to lose everything.

**Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Jonathan Safran Foer**

Nine-year-old Oskar Schell has embarked on an urgent, secret mission that will take him through the five boroughs of New York. His goal is to find the lock that matches a mysterious key that belonged to his father, who died in the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11. This seemingly impossible task will bring Oskar into contact with survivors of all sorts on an exhilarating, affecting, often hilarious, and ultimately healing journey.

**The Terrorist's Son: A True Story by Zak Ebrahim**

An extraordinary story, never before told: The intimate, behind-the-scenes life of an American boy raised by his terrorist father—the man who planned the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

In this book, Ebrahim dispels the myth that terrorism is a foregone conclusion for people trained to hate. Based on his own remarkable journey, he shows that hate is always a choice—but so is tolerance.

**One Shot at Forever by Chris Ballard**

In 1971, a small-town high school baseball team from rural Illinois playing with hand-me-down uniforms and peace signs on their hats defied convention and the odds. Led by an English teacher with no coaching experience, the Macon Ironmen emerged from a field of 370 teams to become the smallest school in modern Illinois history to make the state final, a distinction that still stands.