September 4th, 2014

To: Parents/guardians

SUBJECT: Research, Genetics and Bioethics Course

Your student is enrolled in the course Research, Genetics and Bioethics. As part of this course, we will be learning about issues related to science and society, and discussing them in class. I am very excited about the course, the issues to be discussed, and our class format. Most importantly, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to teach and exchange dialogue with your sons and daughters in an academic setting. This class will be discussing some controversial issues and that has served as the primary initiative behind this letter.

This course will investigate the dilemmas that science and technology have created in modern society. Students will be expected to investigate and actively problem-solve selected issues that are currently being debated by scientists, politicians, and philosophers. Upon completion of this course, students will have a heightened awareness of the impact that scientific discoveries have on society.

Students will be expected to present their ideas in a structured and analytical way, and this course will strive to introduce reasoning skills into their intellectual growth. We will not advocate any one position in the issues we address—rather, we will try to investigate the perspective of many different stakeholders. By learning about different ethical perspectives, points of view, and decision-making models, students will have tools to approach the controversial issues systematically and thoughtfully, and be better-equipped to be effective citizens in our democratic society. We will respect and honor the family and cultural values that students bring to our discussions at all times.

Please review the course syllabus, which lists the topics that will serve as the focus for class debate, discussion, and research.

We will be using materials for class discussion from various sources including newspapers, periodicals, professional medical journals and bioethics publications. I will supplement the issues with films that are related to the topics being discussed. Should you wish to review the materials, I will have them available in my classroom. Feel free to call, email, or visit any time.

I am personally committed to making this class a meaningful one that will provide your student with the thinking skills necessary to resolve some of these issues as they confront them in their personal lives. I am looking forward to an exciting year and your student is what will make it all worthwhile. Thank you for the opportunity to be a teacher for them.

Kathryn Davis