

# From the Headmaster

GARHETT WAGERS



Jayden Avila, Class of 2027, keeps active on a rolling board in the Gymnasium.



Garhett Wagers  
Headmaster

**A**s a school for children from 2 to 14 years of age, growth is what we are all about. Over their years at St. Mark's, our children grow physically, intellectually, and spiritually. As faculty and staff, we grow our own skills, expertise, and the depth of our understanding of childhood development so we can serve our students best. Unfortunately, my beard has grown grayer as well, but I digress.

Growth, evolution, maturation, advancement, improvement: these words all essentially mean the same thing. They speak to progressive development, which is something we emphasize at St. Mark's each year. This year will be no different; we see growth all around our school. Newly-formed partnerships with the Rice University School Mathematics Project and the Rice School Literacy and Culture Project support the growth of our language arts and math curriculums and pedagogical practices. A newly renovated gym will allow us to grow our athletics and physical education programs, helping our students to have strong, healthy bodies. Our IDEA Program (Innovation and Design for Educating with Action) in the middle school empowers us to nurture a more learner-centric model of schooling that includes independent study, design thinking, innovation, and expanding STEM initiatives. You may have noticed that this publication has expanded, allowing us to more fully share the stories of St. Mark's.

An organization is like an organism in many ways. In growth, we can experience growing pains, and sometimes appear awkward as we settle into our new size. At St. Mark's, growth truly is a positive and imperfect process. We each have an important role to play, and it is in those phases of awkward growth where the partnership between parent, child, and school is leaned upon most heavily. We are so grateful for these essential partnerships as we navigate the process of growing with our students, meeting them where they are when they arrive, and celebrating their uniqueness throughout the journey. A friend and colleague, Rick Ackerly, writes in *The Genius in Every Child*, "Discipline is the business of education...education is a lifelong process of learning and practicing disciplines of making it in the world." He adds, "Discipline is what we need to be good stewards of our child's genius." By discipline, he is referring to something we have and work to develop, not something we do to someone. At St. Mark's, we work to practice this discipline every day as we steward our students' intellectual curiosity, faith, and passion for discovery.

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