

#### Greetings Swift Family,

Any look back at the 2020-21 school year, whether six months later or six years from now, will prominently include the words "Covid" and "pandemic." To say it was a challenging year for all of us would be an epic understatement, as it would to say how proud I am of our community for its resilience. It has become commonplace for teachers and staff to go the extra mile to ensure that learning continues despite layers of safety measures. While the fall of 2021 brought some measures of relief, we look forward to the day when school looks more like we knew it pre-pandemic.

My own review of the past year-plus includes pride in not only our tenacity but much progress and growth as well.

- \* We have hired an additional counselor to proactively address the collective mental health needs of our students as a result of the learning and social disruption caused by the pandemic.
- Two are growing the STEAM program with intention, via learning tools acquired through the success of the Swift Fund, which reached a new height of 77% parent participation in 2020-21.
- 📩 Also thanks to support of the Swift Fund, we upgraded technology both for the last-resort option of remote learning and smoother, more robust delivery of content in the classrooms.
- \* We have broadened our curriculum to introduce Drama and Italian language education, and we have reimagined music and added an after-school club for percussion.

Swift students will have more areas to shine and more opportunities to emphasize the right-brain strengths of their dyslexic minds.

I look enthusiastically forward to continuing and growing the Swift mission. We consistently hear from alumni families about the transformation in their students facilitated by their years at Swift. If you have fond memories of your Swift School experience, I hope you will take time to share them with me. We will be sharing these stories of gratitude far and wide, and I look forward to hearing many more examples of The Swift Effect® in 2022 and beyond.

With gratitude and all best wishes,

ris formas



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# Aurora ★ 2020-21 Annual Report

## Gratitude, Growth, & Comradery Dear Dyslexia.

I worked very hard at implementing the many strategies I was taught. I excelled academically, socially, and most importantly, my confidence soared. You prepared me with the work ethic I needed to be successful outside of the classroom.

Now that I'm a confident, successful, high school senior, ready to conquer the many challenges that come my way, I would like to make you aware of several things.

First, I do think it is ironic that I am finally opening up to you in October, which as you already know, is Dyslexia awareness month. What I also think you should know is that YOU, yes YOU, make learning difficult for more than 40 million American adults and children. Unfortunately, only about 2 million are aware that YOU are their problem, and they struggle year after year thinking they are less than, or not as smart as their peers.

My younger self might never forgive you for the anxiety I felt every time it was my turn to read out loud in the classroom. Dyslexia, don't you know that kids can be really mean? Still there YOU were, "My Goliath", mixing up my letters and numbers when it was my turn to

> read. It was very obvious that I was going to have to work much harder just to keep up, and so that's what I did. I was determined to do well. I was also lucky enough to be one of the 2 million that were aware that YOU, Mr. Dyslexia, were my problem. I was not less than. I just had an obstacle to overcome, and so I did.

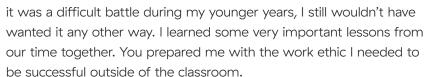
> In 5th grade my dad got a new job and my family relocated to Atlanta. According to Elizabeth, Swift School is the reason God placed us in Atlanta. It was here where my parents found a school that was very supportive of students who had different learning styles. Wow, I hit the



William Lee Brown ★ Letter of Thanks

jackpot on so many levels. I quickly made friends, and I realized there were so many bright kids that were just like me. I worked hard at implementing the many strategies I was taught, and I excelled academically, socially, and most importantly my confidence soared.

I truly believe for the first time that YOU were NO Goliath, just one of the many hurdles that would come my way. Armed with the right tools, I was able to live with you and learn from you. Although



During middle school I started spending a lot of time playing golf with my dad. Quickly, I realized that for me, golf is not just a hobby. I was hooked. When I proudly got accepted to Mount Vernon, one of Atlanta's more competitive schools, I was determined to earn a spot on their golf team. I worked diligently at golf practice, went home and practiced some more. I was ecstatic when I made the team. It didn't stop there. I kept working at it and the following year, I was playing on the varsity team as a freshman. My dedication to the team since then has helped me to win several tournaments, receive the coaches award, and to be chosen as the Senior team captain.

I never thought I would be saying this, but thank you, Dyslexia. You made me work extremely hard and taught me how capable I am when I put my mind to achieving a goal. With your help, I have been able to turn troubles into strengths and to be empathetic to others who are battling their own Goliath. For this, I will be forever grateful.

Thank you for all you have done. William Lee Brown



#### Where Are They Now?

Collin Moonan (left) and William Brown (right) are both current undergraduates at Texas Christian University in Fortworth. Antonio Hundley (middle) is a current student at Baylor University in Houston. The three Swift friends recently reunited at the TCU/Baylor football game to enjoy the comradery, share their successes, and describe how they continue to grow after attending Swift School.

# Faculty Professional Development

Professional development differentiates a Swift education from other options. As a school specialized in the remediation of Dyslexia, thousands of hours of professional development are invested into the Swift School Faculty. Ongoing mentorship from seasoned colleagues serves to support new teachers. As a result our faculty is highly trained, educated, and prepared to deliver instruction using practices designed for our learners. This translates directly to student achievement and success.

#### **Professional Development in Instructional** Approaches and Curriculums used at Swift

- ★ Orton-Gillingham Associate (OGA) and Certified Level Coursework (OGA)
- ★ Orton-Gillingham Practicums (OGA) Classroom Educator, Associate, and Certified Levels
- ★ Orton-Gillingham Approach (OGA) Workshops (Lesson Planning, Phonological/ Phonemic Awareness, Error Correction, Writing, Morphology, etc.)
- ★ Woodin Math Workshops & Training 1–8
- ★ Wit & Wisdom Workshops & Training 1–8
- ★ The Writing Revolution Leading the Revolution & Advancing Thinking Through Writing I

#### **Research and Outreach**

- ★ Swift Institute Presentations (2020-2021) Experience Dyslexia, What is Dyslexia?, What is Structured Literacy?, The Impact of Social Emotional Learning on Behavior, Language Processing, Technology in the Classroom, Multisensory Math, Understanding Psychological Assessments, Prevent the Summer Slide
- ★ Orton-Gillingham Subscriber, Classroom Educator, Associate, and Certified Level Coursework
- ★ Orton-Gillingham Practicums Classroom Educator, Associate, and Certified Level

#### **Professional Symposiums** (in no particular order)

- ★ IDA- International Dyslexia Conference (Virtual)
- ★ OGA National Conference (Virtual)
- ★ National Business Officers Association Conference (NBOA) Virtual
- ★ Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) Annual Conference (in-person)
- ★ ISM Strategic Planning with emphasis on Strategic Financial Planning (Facilities, Financial Aid, Long-Range Planning, COVID Response, etc.)
- ★ ISM Pandemic Briefing with Medical Experts for Independent Schools (Virtual) - bi-monthly all of 2020 and 2021.
- ★ KSU Independent School Symposium
- ★ Women's Leadership Institute (SAIS) Virtual (April, 2021)
- ★ Think Quest (Gordon Hwang) Aug.-Sept. 2020 and Team Retreat (Sept. 2020)
- ★ The Reading League Annual Conference (Nov. 2020)
- ★ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Workshop (July 2021)
- ★ Georgia Technology Conference (Nov. 2020)

## Learning Enhancements

May 2019 - Natalie Felix receives Fellow status from The Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators (OGA)

July 2019 - Wit & Wisdom Professional Development began and continues to be delivered to all Lower Division, Speech & Language Pathologists, and Middle Division Language Arts teachers.

October 2019 - Recognized by the Academy of Orton Gillingham Practitioners and Educators (OGA) as an Accredited Training Program - OGA Associate Level

August 2020 - Swift hires a full-time drama instructor

April 2021 - Recognized by the Academy of Orton Gillingham Practitioners and Educators (OGA) Swift becomes an Accredited Training Program -OGA Certified Level

May 2021 - With the class of 2021, the number of Swift graduates jumps to 109.

June 2021 - Swift added a summer Multisensory Math Clinic for rising 5th and 6th graders.

August 2021 – Wit and Wisdom was expanded to encompass grades 1-8.

August 2021 - A formal onboarding procedure was implemented with all new Associates within the Lower Division. Professional development training in all academic programming, social-emotional, and behavioral programs is taking place to properly prepare new teachers to teach our students.

August 2021 - Swift School Lower Division Teacher, Mandy Menshon, is consulting with Lower Division teachers to support math instruction.

August 2021 - Swift hires a full-time Orton Gillingham Fellow, a part-time foreign language teacher, and a parttime STEAM instructor

August 2021 - Afterschool STEAM club began.

August 2021 - Percussion and Chorus club is continued.

August 2021 - Swift School sponsors the Dyslexia Dash

August 2021 - Swift School sponsors the International Dyslexia Association Conference.

August 2021 - Swift hires an additional counselor to better support social-emotional learning.

#### **Professional Preparedness**

have earned graduate and postgraduate degrees in the fields of reading, language acquisition, learning differences, early childhood education, elementary education, science education, mathematics, speech and language pathology, educational

leadership, guidance and counseling,

psychology, business administration,

and other related fields.

the 70-hour

Associate Level course (as of December 2021.) The remaining 25% are either completing the course during the 2021-2022 school year or during the two-week intensive course in June of 2022.

#### **Current Level of OGA Credentials** & Ongoing Coursework/Practicum

- 1 Fellow Member
- 1 Fellow-in-Training Member
- 1 Certified Member
- 6 Associate Level Members
- 11 Classroom Educator Members
- 6 Associate Level Practicum Trainees (2021-2022)
- 5 Associate Level Coursework Attendees (2021-2022)
- 5 Associate Level Coursework Attendees (Summer 2022)



## Growth

MAP\* Growth Assessment
(formerly Northwest
Evaluation Association,
NWEA) is one aspect
of Swift's comprehensive
assessment plan.

#### MAP Growth Facts

Nationally Normed 🌟

comparing student achievement and growth to others in the same grade nationally

Computer Adaptive 🗲

test questions adapt to the student's performance level

Rauch UniTs (RIT Scores) 
track growth through the

track growth through the year and across grade levels

The graphs depict Fall/Spring performance in reading and mathematics in the 2020-21 academic year.

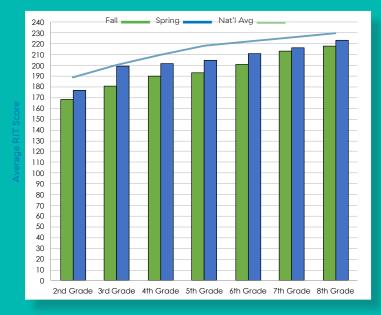


Caution when interpreting:
These graphs depict the
performance of a small group
of diverse students.

\*Measurement of Academic Progress

## ssessment

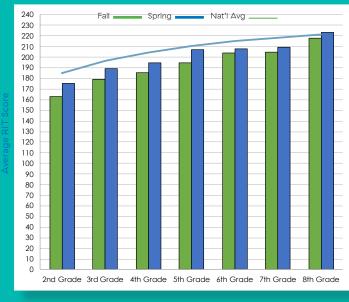
#### **MAP Growth Assessment: Mathematics**



#### Fall to Spring Growth

Domains assessed include Numbers and Operations, Algebraic Thinking, Measurement and Data,

#### MAP Growth Assessment: Reading



#### Fall to Spring Growth

# Student 🚖 Profile

## Student Averages

Average # of school years 4.5 8th graders are enrolled Average # of school years 1-7th graders spend here Average Lower Division Student to Teacher Ratio Average Lower Division Student to Teacher Ratio

## Student Diversity by Race

Asian

Black/African American

Middle Eastern

Native American

76% White

Two or More Races

Race Not Listed

## 2021 Graduating Class

Private High Schools Public High Schools

Cumulative enrollment since 1998

Number of graduates since 2013



Swift is an incredible learning environment. Our understanding of dyslexia, immersive approach, highly trained and caring teachers, total school experience, and continuous tracking of results all serve a singular and very important purpose. That is to build the educational foundation for Swift students to reach their full potential—inside and outside the classroom, around the world, now and for the rest of their lives.

The Swift Effect® empowers students in a transformative, immersive, and positive environment where students learn to:



#### Leverage Strengths

Swift students learn to utilize tools and strategies that enable them to reach their full potential.



#### **Unlock Confidence**

Swift students build a deep understanding and acceptance of their strengths and challenges, resulting in a steadfast belief in themselves.



#### Advocate Relentlessly

Swift students develop the resilience and determination to speak up for themselves and their learning needs.



#### **Embrace Responsibility**

Swift students exhibit empathy and model citizenship through their actions and words, becoming positive contributors to their communities and the world.



#### **Celebrate Success**

Swift students move forward prepared, empowered, and ready to thrive.





# Class of 2021 Shines On!

We take a moment to reflect back to our 8th Grade Class of 20–21. All throughout last year, uncertainty seemed to overshadow everything. Students who normally looked forward to dances, athletics, and overnight field trips were, instead, dealing with unusual school restrictions (like masks and limited social interactions) and periods of virtual learning.

Despite it all, many in this group managed to stay positive, encourage peers, and better themselves. Several students were inducted into the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) for their perseverance and hard work (Ava, Avery, Grace, Jacob, Lily). Our Shining Stars received unique recognition: an engraved star placed on our Shining Star Wall in remembrance of their time at Swift (Avery, Chase, Frank, Jacob, Jake).

We recognized students who stood out as role models (Kate for her determination and Avery for his citizenship). The Director's Award, voted on by all faculty, was presented to Lily who demonstrated significant academic and personal growth. Lily was also the recipient of this year's NJHS Outstanding Achievement Award (OAA) which included a scholarship grant!

As the now 9th grade students move forward, their Swift family wishes them the very best on their personal and academic journey. We would remind them of the lessons their teachers worked to instill in them — to work hard, to not ever be afraid to try, and to take risks in ways that make them better students, better friends, and better citizens.

Your Swift Family believes in you! Stay positive and keep learning. And, from the famous words of Winston Churchill, "Never, never, never give up."



Congratulations to our brilliant, Class of 2021!
We wish you bright years and lifelong learning.

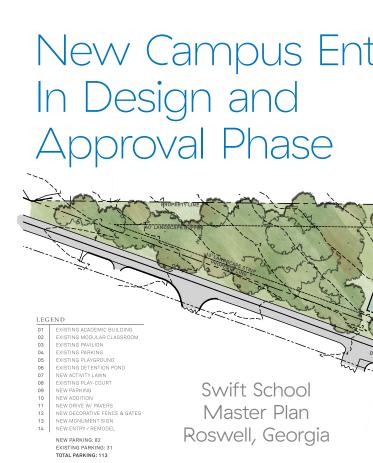
The 2020-21 school year will be remembered by most of the world for the Covid pandemic and the isolation and uncertainty that resulted from it. While the past year-plus could absolutely be defined by unprecedented challenges, at Swift School there is reason to look back on it with fondness. While staying on-campus and in-school for the majority of the year is usually not a reason for celebration, in 2020-21 the Swift community's relentless commitment to learning in-person is indeed a commendable accomplishment. Relentless was one of the rallying cries for the faculty last year.

In addition, our community's support of the Swift Fund reached new heights in recent history with a parent participation rate of 77%, and the completion of nearly all pledge payments for the Paving the Path capital campaign. Indeed, support for the Swift Fund facilitated upgraded technology throughout the school, from Chromebooks and iPads to 75" LCD monitors to replace projectors and smartboards, from document cameras and animation stations to robot kits, STEAM lab equipment, and internet security filters. Learning at Swift School was dramatically enhanced by the generosity of our community.

We are humbled and grateful for everyone's generosity, especially during such a challenging time for all of us. The Swift School is stronger because of your living, breathing, loving demonstration that adversity brings out the best in us.

With our sincere gratitude,

Scott Frank Chair, Board of Trustees Chris Pomar Head of School



ollowing-up on the Paving the Path campaign update from the last Aurora magazine, the capital improvements originally planned to reconfigure the campus entrance have been updated.

After pausing the timing of the project at the onset of the pandemic, the Swift School board of trustees chose to look at alternative ideas for a new entryway. Originally designed to cut a new entrance into the campus from Dogwood Road, that plan was rejected after the cost of extensive radical grading, detention pond relocation and retaining walls construction was deemed too expensive for the scope of this project. And in addition to other factors, the Dogwood Road entrance did not serve the school as well as initially proposed.

A new entrance to campus is being proposed that will achieve several beneficial goals while avoiding the complexity and premium cost of building uphill that the Dogwood Road entrance would necessitate:



The campus "gateway" will remain on Grimes Bridge Road, but will move west, farther away from the traffic light and intersection at Dogwood Road, so the entry and exit to campus will be less disruptive to local traffic. It will employ a single entry but include two egress lanes, one for left turns and one for right turns leaving the campus. The entry and exit will no longer be reversed, so we will finally do away with our "dyslexic driveway."

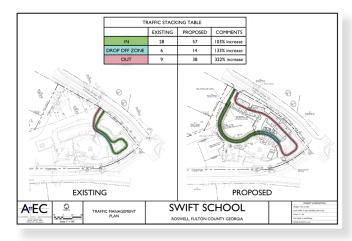
The new driveway will feature the ability to doublestack cars in the U-shaped drive at arrival and departure times, further reducing the traffic impact on Grimes Bridge Road.

This plan results in a new playground space, more than twice as large as the current playground, which will be adjacent to the student buildings and will not require crossing an active driveway to reach, ensuring safety and eliminating passerby traffic noise from Grimes Bridge Road.

Further ensuring safety, the U-shaped drive will be gated at its beginning and end, which will create a completely pedestrian border to the playground. The two gates will be opened only for AM and PM carpool use.

Visitors, deliveries, and other school-day traffic will have the ability to come and go without breaking through a carpool queue or interfering with playground access. A large net gain in on-campus parking will be realized as well.

The Plan allows for areas for future campus improvement and expansion to be accessed without the need to disrupt the school's primary entrance and exit.



See above for a rendering of the campus master plan showing the driveway project. Pending civic approvals and materials procurement, the bulk of construction will take place in the summer of 2022 or 2023. Stay tuned for more updates, and please reach out to Head of School Chris Pomar, cpomar@ theswiftschool.org with any questions about this plan or future campus development.

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# Swift Supporters Shine

Thank you to everyone who made a charitable contribution to Swift from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. Every effort has been made to provide complete and accurate information. If errors or omissions have occurred, please accept our most sincere apology and inform the Advancement office at advancement@theswiftschool.org

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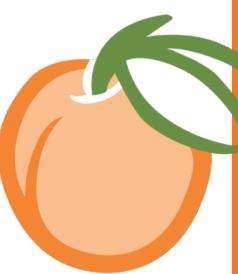
Voya Financial

### Rich and Kelly Phillips Tuition Assistance Fund

Established in 2020 by Emeritus Board Chair Dr. Richard Phillips and his wife, Kelly, Swift School's first named endowment fund creates a permanent source of income for the school's financial assistance program. Recipients will have demonstrated financial need as determined by the school. Proceeds from the fund help keep the school accessible to students of all financial backgrounds.



Thank you to the Swift School



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the support she needed to be successful. ??

-Glenda, whose daughter attended Swift from 4th to 8th grade



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