

BOARD REPORT

Treasure Coast Classical Academy
April 25, 2023



Enrollment Planning and Lottery

Year to date table shown below. Trends noted include the highest loss of students occurring at the start of semester two, backfilling occurring in grades K-4, and highest attrition occurring in grades 7th, 8th, and 9th.

	Goal	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	YTD Growth/Loss
K	84	86	90	90	89	89	88	88	88	88	2%
1	84	89	88	88	87	87	87	86	86	86	-3%
2	147	147	148	149	149	148	147	147	147	147	0%
3	126	127	127	130	130	130	129	129	129	129	2%
4	138	143	142	143	143	143	143	141	140	139	-3%
5	138	142	142	143	142	141	139	139	137	137	-4%
6	138	138	136	135	135	134	130	130	129	128	-7%
7	115	110	109	108	108	107	100	100	99	96	-13%
8	161	152	148	149	149	148	143	142	141	137	-10%
9	50	45	44	42	41	40	38	37	37	34	-24%
TCCA Total	1181	1179	1174	1177	1173	1167	1144	1139	1133	1121	
AVG FTE	1158										

Optima’s charter management team is awaiting input from the school administration and board to finalize the 2023-2024 enrollment plan. Applications for next year are being accepted and 696 students have applied as of 04/24/2023, with the highest number applied in kindergarten. Once an enrollment plan is approved, lotteries will be conducted to admit students.

Per Optima’s February 13, 2023 response to then Chairman Joseph Featherstone’s request for information related to TCCA’s class size, Andy Binns, FTE expert, will be on site April 28, 2023. Optima had advised in its recommendation that Dr. Binns be retained to provide additional training to the principal and registrar on the process to establish and implement TCCA’s master schedule for class size compliance. We also advised that Dr. Binns visit TCCA to explain class size features within Focus software, for example the multi-classroom option. April 28ths meeting will be with Mrs. Murphy and Optima staff to review class size topics. Dr. Binns will also meet with Mrs. Pendleton and the administrative team to answer questions and advise on Focus setup. Dr. Binns is the former Director of FTE and Student Reporting for the School District of Palm Beach County, and is a regular presenter at the annual Florida Charter School Conference in Orlando.

Applications & Wait List (as of 04/24/2023)

	Applications	Wait List
K	202	59
1	73	24
2	65	53
3	50	42
4	52	45
5	45	36
6	76	71
7	55	47
8	36	30
9	28	25
10	14	12
11		
12		
	696	444

Finance & Compliance

Revenue

Optima has secured a \$200,000 commitment to the future TCCA-North location in Palm City. Historical revenue and loans obtained by Optima are outlined below.

Description	Type	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
Facility Financing - tax exempt bonds	loan	-	19,700,000	-	-	-
Gym Financing - pending	loan	-	-	-	-	-
Hillsdale College loan	loan	-	-	250,000	-	-
Additional Millage Referendum	local rev	-	-	-	1,682,042	702,174
Sales Surtax Referendum	local rev	-	105,395	188,019	-	128,657
Safety & Security Grant	grant	-	10,008	15,316	-	-
Egis donation	grant	-	2,500	-	-	-
Ed Networks donation	grant	-	1,200	-	-	-
PPP	grant	-	584,500	-	-	-
Optima Loan	loan	500,000	-	-	-	-
Private Loan	loan	250,000	-	-	-	-
Barney Family Foundation	grant (TCCA-N)	-	-	-	200,000	-
CSP	grant	-	600,000	200,000	-	-
ESSER II Cares Act	grant	-	-	-	271,139	397,117
ESSER III ARP	grant	-	-	-	-	-
		750,000	21,003,603	653,335	2,153,181	1,227,948

Total Loans	750,000	19,700,000	250,000	-	-	20,700,000
Total Grants	-	1,198,208	215,316	271,139	397,117	2,081,780
Total Local Rev	-	105,395	188,019	1,682,042	830,831	2,806,287
						25,588,067

Compensation

School Recognition funds were paid out on 02/24/23 to all employees, with full time staff members each receiving \$1,868.64. These funds were issued by the state due to TCCA's academic performance in 2021-2022 under the leadership of Ms. Swearingin and Optima, and with the work of all faculty and staff during the 20-21 and 21-22 school years.

Budgeting and Accounting

We conducted a budget workshop with the school administration on April 10, 2023, and an enrollment meeting on April 17, 2023. Optima met with Mrs. Pendleton, Mr. Foat, and ESI on April 13, 2023 to review current and proposed staffing plans.

Optima staff continue to work with Martin County School District to address the school's share of local sales tax monies per a November 6, 2018 [referendum](#). TCCA received an allocation for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, but only this month received official correspondence from the district regarding the 2022-2023 allocation. A response regarding the 2021-2022 disbursement is pending.

The finance team has been working with Ms. Zettler to obtain a curriculum inventory for the purpose of planning 23-24 purchasing. Hillsdale's Bill of Materials includes over 1,000 titles for K-12 schools. On average, TCCA has spent \$217,000 annually on curriculum. The school spent \$783,000 on curriculum between 2019 and February of 2023.

Bond covenants

Upcoming deliverables:

- 5/15/23: Quarterly Report, to include Debt Service Coverage Ratio, Days Cash on Hand, changes in personnel or organizational structure, changes in student funding, enrollment by grade, budget for succeeding quarter, balance sheet, and budget versus actual report for immediately preceding quarter. Measurements as of 03/31/23: D/S coverage ratio 1.31 and DCOH 86.
- 6/1/23: Annual certificate of budgeted expenses
- 6/1/23: Annual budget

Board Training

Per F.S. 1002.33 and TCCA Bylaws, governing board members are required to complete training in Florida charter school governance.

Upcoming governance training:

- Ms. Maria Wells- 2-hour refresher training course (required)
- Mr. Scott King- fall Hillsdale conference (optional but recommended)
- Ms. Maria Wells- fall Hillsdale conference (optional but recommended)

Policies

Policy 1400, Accounting Policies, is on the 4/25/23 board agenda for changes per Brian Carpenter's review.

Compliance

Title IX update was provided to school administration on April 17, 2023. Optima is awaiting the school's response in order to establish Title IX roles, investigation process, and policies for TCCA.

Hillsdale College

The College provided an updated Best Practices document (version 2.0)- attached for reference. A board development session occurs semi-annually in the spring and fall. All board members are encouraged to attend.

Operations

In addition to the ongoing support provided by Optima for TCCA's non-academic functions, Tama Williams, Area Operation Manager for OptimaEd, has stepped in to fill gaps at TCCA due to the resignation of the School Operations Manager on April 14, 2023.

- Weekly meetings with SOM/Operations team - support, questions, training
- On campus daily for hands on training with Operations team, lunch coverage, carline duty
- On campus while dean and principal attend Hillsdale working alongside staff
- Hands on training with Ops Specialist and Ops Assistant, Clinic nurse, Kitchen staff, facilities, Aftercare Coord, Registrar - to ensure smooth transition of new SOM
- Partnering with Principal and SOM on HR Q's
- Attending county meetings regarding expansion and carline
- Facilitating carline daily
- Partnering with Martin County School District- Focus - report cards and/or Focus to correct errors, questions, training for SOM
- Partnering with Martin County Head of Safety for MC schools - to train SOM on safety and security guidelines.
- Meetings with Summit on TCCA campus, and including relevant TCCA staff

- NSLP
- Currently interviewing candidates for SOM - partnered with principal.
- Facilitating Intent of Return for current Operations staff - nurse, BASE, Facilities, Operations Office Staff
- Interviewing for Health and Wellness Coordinator
- Inventory of school - curriculum , furniture, supplies
- Supply and curriculum ordering for 23-24 , developing parent shopping list, developing Hillsdale list

Ms. Williams has also worked with Ms. Sinatra, Athletic Director, on the FHSAA application process and supporting documents and the overall development of the athletics program at TCCA.

Other areas of work in operations include:

IT and Safety and Security

- Centegix rollout - 90 day implementation - IT, Martin County School Safety director, Centegix, SOM, training of staff to come, weekly meetings and planning with Centegix - waiting on one more component for install - Due mid-May
- Facilitating daily SRO substitutes to ensure TB's w/their sergeants on high importance items - partnering with new SRO
- Training in monthly drills, logging those, timing those, facilitating alert systems, and training of staff - attending all drills -twice monthly including ensuring compliance of SafeSchool Vector staff training
- Ensuring threat assessment meetings, which include SOM, Deans, guidance counselor, SRO
- Ensuring SOM training on Crisis Reunification plan
- Assisting in duties already on the list to ensure smooth transition of SOM (carline barriers, mirrors throughout school, other future safety items)

Communications/PTC/Project Coordinator

- Training staff on communications such as emergency alerts (SwiftK12)
- Facilitating training for office staff, athletic director, and SOM between Optima - to train on platforms such as TCCA website, Constant Contact (newsletter), and Focus
- Bridging the gap between Optima and TCCA - including relevant TCCA staff in all emails to accounting, marketing, athletics, HR, facilities, PTC
- Training SOM on weekly newsletter and communications to parents
- Attending PTC board meetings as a silent support
- Ensuring PTC understands compliance (such things as SRO, parking and crowds, liability insurance)

Creating Summer To Do list for SOM, Facilities, and Operations staff, and planning operations of 1st month of school for 23-24 (Hands on support on campus)

- Student badges
- Driveline for Carline

Before and Aftercare:

- Collecting unpaid invoices as we enter the last month of school.

Marketing/Website

- Troubleshooting teacher pages
- Created event pages for PTC events
- Built sponsor forms on website for PTC events
- Managed and shared bowling event RSVPs
- Disabled bowling event RSVP form upon registration closing

IT

- No major issues to report
- Set up new board member email account and provided support on access and forwarding questions
- Preparing spare or collected computers for staff use when needed
- Repairs of any damaged laptops and Chromebooks
- Preparation for upcoming FAST, CLT and PST; working closely with Mrs. Zettler
- Beginning plans for summer/end of school general technology maintenance and/or upgrades

BEST PRACTICES FOR HILLSDALE COLLEGE AFFILIATED K-12 SCHOOLS

Ten Key Characteristics of Hillsdale Classical Schools

Hillsdale Classical Schools commit to embrace and uphold the following key characteristics:

1. A curriculum that is content-rich, balanced, and strong across the four disciplines of math, science, literature, and history
2. Instruction in the Western tradition through history, literature, philosophy, and the fine arts
3. Study of the American literary, moral, philosophical, political, and historical traditions
4. Explicit instruction in phonics and grammar
5. The study of Latin as a requirement for all students
6. An approach to instruction that acknowledges objective standards of truth, goodness, and beauty
7. A well-educated and articulate faculty who use traditional, teacher-led methods of instruction
8. A commitment to use technology effectively without diminishing the faculty leadership that is crucial to academic achievement
9. A plan to serve Grades K through 12 (even if the school must open with fewer grades) so as to provide continuity and a recurrent examination of subjects throughout a student's career
10. A school culture of moral virtue, decorum, respect, discipline, and studiousness among both students and faculty

In upholding these ten principles, the school exhibits the following best practices for governance, leadership, curriculum, pedagogy, and school culture.

GOVERNANCE

The Board exists to serve, execute, and protect the mission of the school. To that end, the Board and school have a written mission statement, which the Board reviews regularly. The board governs the school rather than managing it. It deliberates, then speaks with one voice to the school leader (i.e. headmaster or principal), who is charged with management of the school's day to day operations.

Character of the Board

The size and make-up of the Board provides for sufficient diversity to serve the school, its community, and the public well. The roles of each Board Member are distinct and described in writing, and the people assigned to these roles can do their work successfully. The school's mission guides all policies and practices and is evident in the climate, culture, and program of the school. The Board operates according to deadlines and long-term objectives. Requirements and expectations for students, parents, faculty, trustees, and employees clearly reflect the mission of the school. Members of the Board are

independent, come from a range of professions, and show a range of talents; they also have the ability to raise funds to serve the school's mission. The Board includes both parent and local community interests.

The following practices support the Board's good governance:

- a. Code of Conduct Statement. There is a statement from each Board Members stating they are committed to matters of good governance of the school. Such statement should certify, at a minimum, that each Board Member has read the school's mission, charter, bylaws, the Board's agreement with Hillsdale College, any management-related contracts, and any other prerequisite materials the Board deems appropriate to ensure each Member has been provided clear information on the mission of the school. It should acknowledge each Member's agreement to serve the mission of the school as a public service rather than with personal interests to speak to the school leader with one voice and recuse him- or herself in matters affecting family or close relations in the operations or governance of the school.
- b. Succession Plan. The Board has a written and/or executed succession plan outlining the transition of the Board from its founding membership and activity to that of long-term governance and strategy.
- c. Board Training. Each Board Member has attended comprehensive board development and training devoted to the disciplines of good policy governance and the Board's role in the school.

Policies

The Board has deliberated, conducted due diligence on, formed, executed, and is following proscriptively written governance-based policies that allow the Board to fulfill the mission of the school and its responsibility to its bylaws, charter authority, and agreement with Hillsdale College. Such policies should include:

- a. Conflict of Interest Policy. The Board has a conflict of interest policy written with clear expectations for each Member's dedication to the public trust. Such policy includes the requirement that each Member attests in writing to their commitment to the school's mission and ethical conduct in carrying out his or her duties.
- b. Board-Management Delegation Policy. An explicit policy ensures that the Board's single point of delegation is between the Board and the school leader and/or the appropriate management company contact. Such policy should express fully and completely the method in which authority is passed from the Board to the school leader in a way prohibiting the co-management of staff duties by Board Members and focused on how the Board will hold the school leader accountable while allowing him or her to exercise prudence. As a whole, the Board should be unhesitatingly responsive to the requests of the school leader for board-appropriate tasks, such as assistance in major donor cultivation, property evaluation, and investment management.

- c. Board Member Term Limitation Policy. The term limitation policy ensures the regular turnover of all Board Members in a judicious fashion, especially providing for the turnover of founding members and the efficient transition of the Board from its founding efforts of the school to long-term governance board membership.
- d. Compliance Policies. These policies outline the Board's and school's statutory, regulatory, and contractual compliance.
- e. Nepotism Policy. A strict nepotism policy provides for full transparency of familial and other relationships.
- f. Financial Oversight Policies. Sound financial oversight policies ensure that assets are mission-directed, properly accounted for, and safeguarded from unreasonable risk. Oversight policies should include the clear separation of financial reporting and transactional duties, and policies on appropriate cash handling, vendor approvals, and purchasing authorization which, collectively, provide for clear checks and balances in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP) or other state or locally-mandated accounting procedures, as appropriate.
- g. Nondiscrimination Policy. There is a nondiscrimination policy in keeping with federal and state law.

Relationship with school leader

It is the Board's responsibility to hire the school leader and ensure that he or she serves the school's mission. The following policies serve this end:

- a. School leader Support and Evaluation Framework. Whether in committee form or by other delegation¹ or policy, the Board exercises effective due diligence with respect to the school leader whereby it ensures an annual assessment of his or her performance and the advancement of both the school leader as an individual and the impact he or she has on the school. The Board supports the school's strategic plan through its effective backing of the school leader, and, as a vehicle for productivity, provides wisdom and counsel to him or her when sought out.
- b. Definition of Limitations. Limitations on the school leader's authority and purview are clearly defined.
- c. Assessment. An established process monitors and governs the Board's work and review of itself and the school leader. Within this consideration, the Board and school must have complete, accurate, legible, and securely maintained records to include board minutes, school personnel records, student files, and administrative reports.
- d. Transition Plan. The Board has a plan for a stable transition when a change occurs in the school's leadership.

¹ For example, to a charter management company. In cases like this, the Board should ensure that the evaluation of the school leader is of high quality and that the school leader is managed well according to the best practices described above.

LEADERSHIP

The school leader (i.e., Principal or Headmaster) manages the day-to-day life of the school. After the Board, the school leader is the most important element in the school's success. The school leader has been thoroughly interviewed and endorsed by Hillsdale College and performs the following functions well.

Fostering classical education. The school leader understands and can effectively communicate the philosophy of classical education and the mission of the school to families, students, and teachers. Through his or her leadership, the mission of the school is central, and he or she is skilled at bringing the mission to bear on the particular questions that arise in the daily life of the school. The school leader takes regular steps to grow in his or her understanding of classical education and the curriculum. Through reading and conversation, the school leader is always deepening his or her knowledge.

Leadership team. The school leader has built an effective leadership team (including, for example, Assistant Headmasters, Deans, and faculty coaches) and delegated well. Within the leadership team, there are clearly defined responsibilities. The faculty and staff have clarity about the roles of each member of the leadership team and communication between the leadership team and the faculty and staff is fluid and productive. The leadership team is stable with low turnover.

Staff management. The school leader hires and retains office staff members who are efficient and productive. Each member of the office staff has clear responsibilities.

Faculty hiring. The school leader hires and retains faculty members who are engaging, knowledgeable, and committed to the classical mission of the school.

Faculty management. The school leader holds and leads regular faculty meetings that are efficient, informative, and generally regarded as a good use of time by all involved. For example, the meetings are opportunities for real conversation among the faculty rather than merely announcements. With the faculty leadership team, the school leader oversees the academic life of the school, ensuring that students are taught the academic skills and habits necessary to succeed while engaging deeply with the school's classical curriculum. The school leader assures that while the school is challenging, student and faculty workload does not result in overworked or strained students and teachers.

Faculty development. The school leader and members of the leadership team regularly observe and coach teachers, giving priority to new and struggling teachers without neglecting the development of senior members of the faculty. The school leader is an excellent teacher him- or herself, and with the help of the administrative faculty leadership team, can advise other teachers in best practices, classical pedagogy, and the curriculum. Teachers receive prompt and substantive feedback on their teaching. There is a robust teacher evaluation process that leads teachers to excellence over time. By observing classrooms frequently, the school leader ensures that there is consistency in behavioral and academic expectations across classrooms and that instruction is vertically and horizontally aligned. The school

leader encourages faculty members who are suited to leadership to build that capacity within themselves.

Parent communication. The school has a consistent method of communicating with parents about upcoming events and school policies, and it is clear to parents that they may approach the school leader with information or questions regarding their children and the school in general. There is a grievance process that ensures the chain of command is followed. A school leader ensures that parents receive effective and proactive communication by teachers. The school leader nurtures the relationship between parent and teacher to create partnerships for the sake of the students.

School handbooks. The school leader manages by means of policies that are written down in advance and consistently followed. Changes to these policies are not made during the year, and when they are made, members of the school community are notified. For example, a handbook for families includes information about the uniform, academic policies, the curriculum, grading policies, and the like, and a separate handbook for faculty and staff explains policies that pertain to employees of the school.

Relations with Board, authorizer, and Hillsdale College. In an *ex-officio* capacity, the school leader holds final authority in the management of the school, outside the broader powers of its Board and any contractual relationship directly between the Board and any management company that may exist. As such, the school leader's accountability is an accumulation of the responsibilities of the staff and faculty and is held to the judgment of the Board who monitors the school leader diligently and respectfully according to its proscriptive policies. Unless otherwise defined contractually between the Board and a management company, the school leader is solely accountable to the Board for the outcome of the school's operation by achieving the results expected from the Board and by not violating the Board's policies limiting his or her authority, domain, or purview. The school leader delivers clear and complete reports regarding the operations of the school and compliance to its policies to the Board in a timely manner. The school leader ensures that the school is up to date on regular and special reports requested from time to time by Hillsdale College.

Budget. The school leader ensures that a tight and transparent budget is created and adhered to, subject to stipulations made by the Board.

State requirements. In keeping with the school's mission, and if applicable, charter agreement and requirements of the school's state authority, the school leader makes sure the school is in compliance with state testing requirements and accountability, including special education and related services.

Marketing. The school leader tracks and has an effective marketing plan for communication, fundraising, (future) alumni engagement, and enrollment management.

Disciplinary policy. The school leader ensures that a school-wide disciplinary policy is established and regularly followed.

Maintenance. The school leader ensures that a sound preventative maintenance program is in place, with sufficient staffing and resources to maintain a functional and clean facility.

Crisis management. The school leader ensures that a sound crisis management/disaster response and recovery plan is in place, completed in cooperation with appropriate local health and safety authorities.

Succession plan. There is a succession plan in place for the school leader in case of an unexpected absence and a planned leadership transition.

PEDAGOGY

Mission

- Teachers demonstrate a knowledge of and commitment to the mission of the school.
- Teachers exhibit the value of learning for its own sake and help cultivate a sense of wonder and delight in their students and in themselves.
- Teachers are committed to learning, understanding, and faithfully teaching the curriculum.

Management

- Teachers lead the classroom by precept and example.
- Teachers establish and maintain a rich and well-ordered learning environment by means of routines, rules, and thoughtful classroom layout.
- Teachers use class time purposefully and effectively.

Instruction

- Teachers lead instruction in the classroom.
- Teachers demonstrate knowledge of their content and how best to teach it.
- Teachers offer well-paced lessons that are planned, informed, organized, clear, and engaging.
- Teachers rely on time-tested instructional methods including thoughtful questions, orderly discussions, and engaging lectures.
- Teachers rely heavily on whole-class instruction. In cases when teachers use group work in class, they keep the number of students per group low and the assignments as focused and brief as possible.

Assignments

- Teachers assign purposeful work that effectively enhances students' understanding.
- Working together, teachers are mindful about the amount of work assigned.

Resources

- Teachers use technology, textbooks, and other resources prudently to support their instruction and to enhance student learning without allowing them to undermine or replace their crucial role as instructional leader.

Assessment

- Teachers use both formative (i.e., ongoing) and summative (i.e., at the end) assessment purposefully to inform instruction in the classroom and to communicate students' academic progress to students and parents.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum provides students with a well-rounded education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in moral character and civic virtue. The curriculum is vertically aligned, so that students progress through the subjects in an orderly way and have the opportunity to return to subjects previously studied so as to deepen their knowledge. The curriculum is horizontally aligned, so that history, literature, music, art, science, and other subjects are taught in synthesis and inform one another.

The school makes use of the *K-12 Program Guide*, a scope and sequence for Kindergarten through 12th Grade, and the Bill of Materials, a list of books and resources for teaching the scope and sequence.

General

- The school's curriculum fulfills the educational and developmental needs of its students.
- The curriculum is content-rich, balanced, and strong across the disciplines.
- The Western tradition is central in the study of history, literature, philosophy, and the fine arts.
- The curriculum shows a rich and recurring examination of the American literary, moral, philosophical, political, and historical traditions.
- The school provides a liberal arts curriculum. Students receive explicit instruction in grammar, logic, and rhetoric (the trivium), which leads to the study of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy (the quadrivium).
 - Guided by the liberal arts, the K-12 curriculum follows stages of learning appropriate to students' development and a spiraling structure that allows for recurrent examination of subjects throughout a student's career.

History

- Through history instruction, students come to understand both the triumphs and the failures of the past.
- History is taught as the narrative created by human thought and action. There is a focus on biography, and the lessons include geography, timelines, images, and primary sources.
- The teaching of American history and government is robust and serious. There is explicit and meaningful instruction on the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and *The Federalist Papers*, through which students learn the importance of limited government, natural rights, and equality as expressed in the American founding.

Science

- The school's science instruction shows that scientific knowledge is valued for its own sake. Science is taught through the stories of scientific advancement and processes within the natural and physical world, and through hands-on lab experiments and demonstrations.
- The classical science curriculum begins in the elementary grades with a content-rich program covering important ideas in the natural sciences in a coherent and orderly way. In the high school years, students study chemistry, biology, physics, and astronomy.

Mathematics

- Classical mathematics instruction leads to precise and critical thought. Through the study of mathematics, students develop a unified means for understanding the natural world.
- Teachers teach and assess conceptual understanding in addition to procedural competency.
- Mathematics instruction progresses from concrete to pictorial to abstract, using appropriate manipulatives and visuals (such as number bonds and bar models) before the introduction of abstract concepts.
- Students are taught to understand mathematical concepts and processes deeply. When shortcuts and memorized drills are employed, students can explain how and why an answer is correct.
- In the grammar school, mathematics is given sufficient time in the day's schedule for both regular instruction and enrichment or remediation.
- Students study mathematics for four years in high school, gaining proficiency through Pre-Calculus.

Literature

- Through the study of literature, students encounter great stories. Literature texts are time-tested and include the best stories of the Western tradition. Through them, instructors teach students to think deeply about human nature and the human experience. Literature is not merely raw material on which to develop reading fluency; rather, the students' study of literature cultivates the moral imagination.
- When possible, students should encounter texts in their unabridged form.
- Students memorize and recite poetry throughout the grade levels.
- Especially in the younger grades, students interact with literature through listening to the teacher read aloud.

Phonics

- Explicit phonics instruction leads students to written expression, reading fluency, and comprehension.
- The school teaches reading using phonics rather than whole language instruction. Explicit phonics instruction is synthetic and systematic.

Grammar and Composition

- Explicit grammar instruction leads students to a thorough understanding of the English language.
- Students receive explicit instruction in grammar and composition, including sentence diagramming, up through grade 8.
- Students practice the art of writing with topics from various subjects within the curriculum.

Latin

- Latin is taught for the sake of students' ability to read Latin texts in their original form, for their understanding of English and for their appreciation of the classical world.
- Students learn Latin by memorizing paradigms and vocabulary, studying grammar, and working through Latin narratives.
- Students study Latin for a minimum of three years in order to gain a thorough understanding of Latin grammar and a basic proficiency in translation.

Moral and Political Philosophy

- Through the study of moral and political philosophy in the high school, students study ancient and modern ideas regarding human nature and the human good, and the effect that the regime has upon the human being's pursuit of goodness and happiness.
- The study of moral and political philosophy necessarily raises fundamental questions about truth, reality, divinity, and human nature. Instruction in philosophy should be led by a teacher with prior training and experience to ensure the subject is presented with depth, moral seriousness, and discernment for the needs and abilities of students. If a suitable teacher is not available, schools may offer the Introduction to Moral and Political Philosophy course, a course that uses literature as its primary approach, rather than advanced coursework on the subject.

Senior Thesis

- Students complete a senior thesis before graduation.
- The senior thesis gives students the opportunity to study intensely a particular work or question under the lens of their classical education.
- Additional criteria and definitions may be found in the *Senior Thesis Handbook*.

Physical Education

- Physical education is made a significant feature of all students' development, both in body and in mind.
- Physical education class provides not merely physical activity, but an opportunity to cultivate strength of character, learn to care for the body, and develop specific physical skills.
- Physical activity beyond physical education classes is part of the daily routine.

Fine Arts

- Fine arts are a significant part of students' aesthetic, cultural, and creative development.
- The study of fine arts points students to what is beautiful, good, and true. The art and music courses include study of the history of art and music, exposure to outstanding works of art and music, and the opportunity for students to produce original works of art and perform music.
- Students take fine arts courses in both art and music in grades K-8 and as elective courses in high school. All students take at least one fine arts course in high school.

CULTURE

The school effectively communicates its virtues and cultivates a community that advances its mission. The school's culture encourages all within it to pursue moral and intellectual virtue. The school's understanding of virtue is grounded in the classical tradition.

School

- There is life and energy in the school. Students and teachers go about their work with enthusiasm, joy, and wonder.
- The appearance of the school supports the essential activity that occurs within it: learning. Hallway and classroom décor is related to the curriculum. The appearance of the school, including the school building itself, is serious, beautiful, and inspiring.
- The school is an orderly place, where consistent procedures rather than rules govern. In other words, students and teachers have adopted the regular habits that make learning possible. The school mission statement is known and followed by all.
- There is a school-wide discipline policy that flows together seamlessly with the discipline policies of each classroom and the schoolwide virtues. A rapport between teacher and student guides the discipline policies. Conversations about student behavior encourage students to develop the intrinsic motivation to do the right thing, rather than because of an extrinsic reward.
- The school promotes thoughtful patriotism. National holidays such as Veterans Day and Constitution Day are celebrated with all students and the school community. Students begin each school day with the Pledge of Allegiance. Courses in American history are marked by a thoughtful study of America's past, its character, and its founding principles. Teachers guide discussion of the tragedies and triumphs in America's past, grounding it in the serious study of history rather than the personal political views of faculty or students.
- Students and teachers are professional in their appearance and dress. Students wear school uniforms.
- The school is thoughtful and thorough in the ways it communicates with its internal and external constituencies. Parents are treated as the first and primary teachers of their students, and the school cultivates productive relationships with families for the sake of the students. There are opportunities for parents to learn from the school leader and faculty about the school's curriculum and culture.

Students

- The school serves students in grades K-12 on one campus, or, in the early years, has a plan to serve these grades on one campus over time. No matter the grade level of a student, the school regards student work seriously and in terms of the school's mission. Students in the upper and lower grades have opportunities to learn with and from each other.

- There is continuity from Kindergarten through grade 12, a unique virtue of a K-12 school. The success of the school's foundational work in the lower grades is manifest in the work and spirit of the upper grades.
- Students speak with adults respectfully and clearly. When asked, they can describe what they are learning. Overall they enjoy being at school. Teachers and students know and respect the school virtues, and teachers incorporate discussion of moral virtue into class naturally and effectively.
- The students are interested in what they are learning, and the classes are engaging and substantive.
- The school is thoughtful about bringing new students in as Kindergarteners and in the upper grades, so that there is a plan for students' success before they begin attending.
- Students in 6th grade and below have homeroom teachers responsible for overseeing their progress through the curriculum and in virtue. Grades are not departmentalized below 6th grade.
- The school is a community and functions as a united whole. Student retention is high.

Teachers

- In the classrooms, teachers carry themselves with compassion and confidence. They show interest in the well-being of the students, and show genuine care for them without overstepping the professional boundaries between teacher and student.
- Teachers are interested in deepening their knowledge of their own subject area. They are interested in knowing what their colleagues on the faculty know and teach. The school leader encourages friendships between teachers and gives them opportunities to learn with and from each other.
- Teachers value their work at the school and believe in the school's mission. Among the faculty, relationships are friendly and professional. Faculty culture supports the well-being of the teachers, which in turn promotes the well-being of the students.
- Teachers participate in the extracurricular life of the school.