

STATE OF THE SCHOOL REPORT | 2021



METAIRIE PARK COUNTRY DAY



Dear Country Day Community,

As we look towards the year ahead with optimism, I cannot help but look back on 2020 with awe. This past year, together, we accomplished great things. Our faculty and staff prepared for an academic year unlike any other. In the midst of a global pandemic they re-arranged classrooms to facilitate social distancing, adjusted established routines to support our new environment, and made sure they were ready for in person and virtual learning. They have shown courage and resilience in an unprecedented time. Our maintenance and facilities staff increased cleaning measures, installed tents for outdoor classrooms as well as hand washing stations throughout campus to help keep our community safe. Our parents encouraged our children, as well as our children's teachers, as we began a school year that was certainly unknown and oftentimes frightening. It was the desire for our students to return to campus, to our community of joyful learning, that allowed us to succeed. By every measure, across every constituency, we have had an incredible year of living our mission by being flexible, adaptable, and facing challenges with honor, optimism, confidence, creativity and a sense of humor.

I am pleased to share some of our 2020 successes in our 2021 State of the School report. Here, you'll read about the ways our faculty and staff are helping our children succeed by returning to their roots as teachers, how our athletes continue to prevail, winning state titles while also being named scholar-athletes, and how the Arts continue to propel the rhythm and heartbeat of our School. I am not sure I have ever been so proud of our Cajun community!

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rachael Gambel".

Rachael Gambel
Chair, Board of Trustees



Academics *A Balanced Education* BY G. HOWARD HUNTER

From my classroom perch on Founder’s Terrace, I have the pleasure to see our lower school cohorts at play. What I have surmised about these operations is that there are definitive rules, rituals and practices at work with room for a bit of whimsy. As the late Dutch historian Johan Huizinga commented “All play means something,” and what I am witnessing is a repose from the banality of modern existence, an alternative reality going back to the primordial self that we deeply need.

Huizinga, a cultural historian of the Middle Ages, defined play as that which is the opposite of serious. Yet serious and play comprise two sides of the same coin; there cannot be one without the other. Good teaching is a proper mix between the two. Now that we are holding classes in tents throughout the campus, a soft touch and a bit of whimsy are in order to assuage the rigors of a difficult time.

Fortunately, play is in our hard wiring. For years Country Day students performed Gilbert and Sullivan operettas because the playfulness of the language is a richer way of learning vocabulary than just memorizing definitions soon to be forgotten (this teacher for example, habitually looks up the same words countless times). And the unbridled mockery of self-important personages in Gilbert and Sullivan (as in Shakespeare) teaches one a healthy irreverence as well as the art of getting the joke. The notion that academics can only be pursued by a grim determination misses the essential point that a life of the mind can bring joy for its own sake. The great 20th century historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. once told me that history is a worthy pursuit for the simple reason that it is a lot of fun. The conceit that history can be fun hardly lessens the profundity.

Of course, the exigencies of educating during a pandemic pose new challenges for faculty, such as teaching live and on zoom, often at the same time. Maintaining social distancing and mask-wearing with our students tests our patience every day. Nevertheless, our teachers continue to find ways that complement material for expanding the mind, from the analysis of Big Data and global trends in the math/sciences, to an in-depth study of the films *Rashomon*, *The Matrix* and *Parasite* in our senior humanities course, which continues to evolve after 25 years. Traditional is not necessarily exhausted or hackneyed — a chapter of *War and Peace* tells us more about the Napoleonic wars than any textbook and Camus’s *The Plague* has never been more relevant. Sometimes the old is posited as new. While technology allows our students to make podcasts, the practice of story telling goes back thousands of years serving our atavistic need for narrative.

The tendency by technocrats and education gurus to refer to the “craft of teaching” is unfortunate. There is no recipe or formula for defining that sense of play as concomitant to the serious business of educating. Finding that balance is an art that cannot be prescribed, but only intuited. While pedagogical tools and best practices can be useful, teaching at its best is an art. My favorite metaphor for teaching (or any other creative activity) would be the artistry of New Orleans’s most favorite son. Take a moment to listen to Louis Armstrong’s Hot Fives and Hot Sevens recorded in New York between 1925 – 1929. Never has there been such a mix of technical virtuosity, flight of the imagination, and understatement with an elegant mix of seriousness and play. Pops continues to astound by his controlled improvisation, a marvelous inspiration for those of us who see teaching as much a mystery as a profession.



HIGHLIGHTS:

- ▶ A 2020 chain crafted collaboratively by students in the metals studio.
- ▶ Messages of kindness and hope stenciled on the sidewalks around campus by upper school students.
- ▶ Elegant, glossy black keepsake boxes produced by middle schoolers in the woodworking studio.
- ▶ Upper School artists' Abstract Self-Portraits displayed in the library that represent their personalities, followed by more traditional digital renderings of themselves using Google Drawings and Adobe Photoshop.
- ▶ Bucket drumming added to lower schoolers' musical repertoire.
- ▶ Pandemic Photographs as documented by photography students. Visit www.mpcds.com/photos to view them all.
- ▶ Monster Mugs and "mugshots" created by ceramics students and shared around campus.



The Arts

BY KATIE ANTIS, ARTS DEPARTMENT CHAIR

The artistic process is alive and well at Country Day, even in the midst of a global pandemic! Visual and Performing Arts students are busy creating pieces that are shared both on campus and virtually through social media and virtual art shows. Musicians gave pop-up performances around campus as well as a socially-distanced "Porch Concert" at the Parents' Association Holiday Boutique in December. The Upper School Drama production of Clue was a smashing success as actors took on the new challenge of performing via Zoom and in front of a camera. Even while we are trying new and innovative

ways to share our art, we are still preserving traditions such as our Lower School Holiday Program in the atrium, which was presented as a livestream video this year.

While we were busy making art, theater, and music on campus, three of our students were still able to be recognized for their off-campus achievements as they were selected for the Louisiana All-State Orchestra. There is so much to be proud of and so much yet to do in 2021!





ATHLETICS

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Head Coach: Mike McGuire	LHSAA Class 1A: Lost in Quarterfinal round
Assistant Coaches: Justin Napoli, Kent McGuire, Roland Daniels	All-District Team: Xane Hunter, Justin Ibieta (MVP), Gabe Kohlmaier, Hartson Moss
Overall Record: 14-15	All-State: Justin Ibieta
District: Champions	All-Metro:

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Head Coach: Adam Gardner	All-District Team: Kaci Chairs (MVP), Sophia Henderson, Ellie Schneider
Assistant Coaches: Joe Mitchell and Jacqueline Rosenblat	All-District Honorable Mention Team: Addison Launey and Maggie Schneider
Overall Record: 17-5	All-State: Kaci Chairs
District: Champions	All-Metro: Kaci Chairs
LHSAA Class 1A: Lost in Semi-Finals	

FOOTBALL

Head Coach: Joe Chango	All-District Second Team: Felix Allen and Steven Wagner
Assistant Coaches: Eric Alexander, Bill Barwa, Mark Drago, Adam Gardner, Sheldon Green, David LeBouef, Matt Stone	All-Metro Team: Justin Ibieta and Tyler Williams
LHSAA State: Semi-Finalists	Allstate Sugar Bowl Scholar Athlete: Andrew Lopez
District: 3 rd Place	LHSAA All-Academic Team: Andrew Lopez
All-District First Team: Randolph French, Justin Ibieta, Scott Isacks, Andrew Lopez, Dylan Simmons, CD St. Hilaire, Tyler Williams	Overall Record:

CROSS COUNTRY

Head Coach: Maurice DuCarpe	District Champions: Yes
Assistant Coaches: Haley Fayette, Susan Lee, Dom Maley	Willie Odem: 1 st in District, 3 rd in state
Girls: 1 st in State	Jack Caplan: 2 nd in District, 6 th in state
District Champions: Yes	Ethan Katz: 3 rd in District, 5 th in state
Elle Powers: 1 st in District, 2 nd in State, All- State Team	Ryan Cooper: 8 th in District
Emma Morton: 4 th in District, 4 th in state	Jean-Paul Doucet: 9 th in District
Emmeline Moore: 5 th in District, 6 th in state	Christian Rodriguez-Fierro: 10 th in District
Margo Thionville: 6 th in District, 10 th in state	Josh Kaplan: 11 th in District
Mason Poole: 11 th in District	Jack Zink: 13 th in District
Delphine Dop: 14 th in District	Ethan Taylor: 16 th in District
Boys: 2 nd in State	LHSAA All-Academic Team: Peter Cannella and Ethan Katz



BOYS' SOCCER

Head Coach: Billy Smith	All-District Honorable Mention: Miles Bellaire, Carter Poole, Thomas Saer, CD St. Hilaire, Tommy Wisdom
Overall Record: 7--11	All-State: Andrew Lopez and Sammy Nichols
District: 1 st Place	All-Star Team: Andrew Lopez
LHSAA State: Lost in the Regionals round	
All-District: Eli Jaffe, Andrew Lopez (MVP), Charlie Michaud (Offensive MVP), Sammy Nichols (Defensive MVP), Willie Odem	

GIRLS' SOCCER

Head Coach: Glenn "Benji" Benjamin	All-District Honorable Mention Team: Madeleine Long
Assistant Coaches: Chris Coniker and Elizabeth Manuel	All-State: Mathilde Tubbs
Overall Record: 9-12-1	LHSCA All-Star Team: Mathilde Tubbs
District: 4 th Place	LHSAA All-Academic Team: Kate Launey
LHSAA Division IV State: Lost in Regionals round	
All-District Team: Ellie Davidson, Kate Launey, Sophia Temple, Mathilde Tubbs (MVP)	



SWIMMING

Head Coach: Catherine Healy	BOYS: 13 th in State
Assistant Coaches: Joelle & Eddie Halpern	SOUTH DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS: Alex Dreyer: 2 nd in 50yd Freestyle, 3 rd in 100yd Backstroke
GIRLS: 11 th in State	Josh Singleton: 2 nd 100yd Freestyle
SOUTH DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS: Charlotte Halpern: 2 nd 100yd Breaststroke, 4 th in 200yd Freestyle	SUGAR BOWL METRO CHAMPIONSHIPS: Josh Singleton: 12 th in 100yd Backstroke
Katie Hennessy: 7 th in 100yd Backstroke	LHSAA DIVISION IV STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS: Alex Dreyer: 4 th 100yd Breststroke, 14 th in 100yd Freestyle
Lilli Marshall: 5 th in 50yd Freestyle, 8 th in 100 yd Freestyle	Josh Singleton: 4 th in 50yd Freestyle, 7 th in 100yd Backstroke
Londyn Norwood: 8 th in 50yd Freestyle	LHSAA All-Academic Team: Katie Hennessy
LHSAA DIVISION IV STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS: Charlotte Halpern: 6 th 100yd Breaststroke, 9 th in 200yd Freestyle	
Lilli Marshall: 5 th in 50yd Freestyle, 6 th in 100 yd Backstroke	
7th in 200yd Medley Relay: Londyn Norwood, Katie Hennessy, Charlotte Halpern, Lilli Marshall	



VOLLEYBALL

Head Coach: Julie Ibieta	Most Outstanding Player Division V State Championship Game: Kate Launey
Assistant Coaches: Dana Launey, Lauren Leaumont, Myra Bordelon	All-Metro Team: Kaci Chairs, Kate Launey, Nia Washington
Overall Record: 48-2	All-Metro Team Honorable Mention: Kelsey Dinvault
LHSAA State: Champions	Metro Coach of the Year: Julie Ibieta
District: 1st Place	LHSAA All-Star Team: Kate Launey (captain) and Kelsey Dinvault
All-District First Team: Ashlyn Barwick, Kaci Chairs, Kelsey Dinvault, Kate Launey (MVP), Kamryn Thomas, Nia Washington	LHSAA All-Academic Team: Ashlyn Barwick and Kate Launey
All-District Second Team: Sophia Henderson and Sydney Wright	Allstate Sugar Bowl Women in Sport Scholarship Recipient Kate Launey
District Coach of the Year: Julie Ibieta	Allstate Sugar Bowl's Greater New Orleans Girls' Prep Team of the Year
Division V All-State Team: Kelsey Dinvault, Kate Launey, Nia Washington, Kaci Chairs	

**Kathy Trosclair Memorial
Award:**
Kate Launey



Financial Statement 2019-20

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

Metairie Park Country Day School has an annual operating budget of \$20 million. The annual operating budget is funded through four major sources: Tuition, Auxiliary Services (Dining, Early Childhood, Summer Programs), charitable giving, such as Annual Fund, and annual endowment draw.

	(Amts in '000)	
Tuition, net of Financial Assistance (\$3,531)	\$12,859	74%
Auxiliary Services: Dining, Early Childhood, and Summer Programs*	\$2,190	18%
Endowment Support	\$557	3%
Contributions, including Annual Fund	\$1,197	5%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$16,803	100%
* 2019-20 Auxiliary Services revenues were net of the credits that were provided to families for services that School was unable to provide during pandemic shut down. These credits had an net impact of (\$200K) to 2019-20 operating budget.		

The largest expense in this operating budget is salaries for our faculty and support staff which are the foundation of the strong and nurturing learning environment we build at Country Day. The remaining funds go towards funding our Instructional and Student Support Programs, including our strong arts and athletics programs, providing financial aid, and maintaining our beautiful campus.

	(Amts in '000)	
Salaries, Taxes, and Benefits	\$12,159	68%
Instructional and Student Support Programming	\$1,454	9%
General and Administrative, including Debt Service	\$1,412	10%
Plant Operations, including Major Repair and Maintenance	\$1,995	13%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$17,020	100%



Development

THE 2020-2021 COUNTRY DAY FUND*

Thanks to our generous donors and 100+ volunteers, this year's Country Day Fund campaign is off to a great start.

99%

Participation from
FACULTY
AND STAFF*

Over
50

VOLUNTEERS
for the
Country Day Fund

100%

Participation from
THE BOARD
OF TRUSTEES*

We've raised nearly
75%

of the dollars needed to reach our
\$750,000 GOAL
for The Country Day Fund

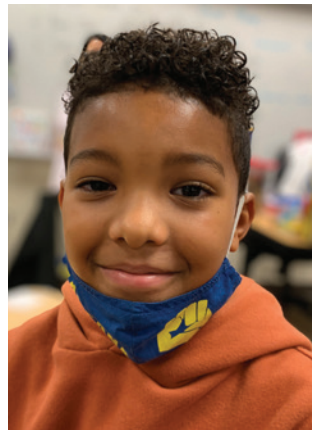
Celebrated the generosity of
240

ASSOCIATES LEVEL DONORS (\$1,500+)
at the drive-through Associates Dinner
in December

COUNTRY DAY
FUND CHAIRS
Karen and
Christian Blessey

MAJOR GIFTS
CHAIR
Malcolm Meyer

PARENT GIVING
CHAIRS
April and
Cedric Scott



Looking Forward

BY IAN CRAIG, INTERIM HEAD OF SCHOOL

In March when students and faculty left campus for distance learning no one knew we would not be returning to school in person for quite some time, and when we finally did, that it would look much different.

For me, it's amazing to look back on that time and think about the first weeks of the pandemic. Teachers engaged in some incredible learning opportunities on such short notice, and then we were virtual, with barely anyone on campus. We quickly mastered Google Meet and Zoom, and learned who the 'most likely not to mute' among us were. It was surreal to conduct faculty meetings virtually, to see my Advisees from home, and to learn how to teach from a distance. We all learned that a 45-minute lesson seems a heck of a lot longer on Zoom, and most of us took the opportunity to grow a beard, for some reason.

There was also a pretty significant fear factor with the unknowns of the virus, and the potential impact personally, and globally. In that time school leaders learned terms we never thought we would have used - social distancing, intubation, cohorts, herd immunity, and the like. Receiving information was like drinking water from a fire hose. We watched one webinar after another, met with peers online to glean best practices for something we had never before dealt with, and read one article after another, and some with conflicting information about the spread, the ability to contract the disease from a surface, the need for intubation, the best protection, and finally, whether children were seemingly immune, or not.

In the end, the *Cliff's Notes* turned out to be; wear a mask, wash your hands, and socially distance as much as possible.

In the ensuing five months this admin team and faculty worked tirelessly to prepare for every eventuality - in person, virtual, or hybrid. We measured and moved truck after truck of furniture into storage, stuck red arrows and dots all over campus (6' apart), rented numerous hand-washing stations, installed dozens of hand sanitizing stations, made classrooms out of every available space, set up huge tents all over campus, and purchased cameras and other technology for classrooms.

In an anxiety-producing start to the school year, perhaps the most difficult aspect has been the hybrid teaching, with a number of students learning from home, while peers were in class. The faculty have been amazing, however, and their desire for professional learning and improvement is palpable. Over time more and more students returned to the point where nearly all of our students were on campus, distancing and wearing masks. While we are not entirely normal just yet, seeing kids compete, socialize, and learn in-person has been amazing.

In the end, the faculty and staff have surpassed expectations in terms of ingenuity and work ethic and the ability to navigate this new normal. The students have risen to the challenge and perhaps there are even some things that will last well after the pandemic is over.

For example, for years we have debated the best time of day for working parents to come to school meetings, whether morning, lunch time, or in the evening. However, at the start of the year I hosted a town hall at noon via Zoom and we had two-hundred and six parents in 'attendance'. While we know that nothing replaces in-person, perhaps the technology can be a bridge at times.

Technology such as the cameras in the classrooms for absent students or the microphones our physical education staff are currently using to be heard with a mask may be here to stay.

Even in the healthiest school years, the flu season can be devastating and we have undoubtedly better-educated our community about the importance of hand-washing and using hand sanitizer to the point that we may be healthier even in a traditional year.

With seven twenty by forty foot tents set up around campus the faculty and students have definitely benefited from being able to gather, have lunch, and have classes outside for much of the day. What was once a treat for students to be able to get outside, may well be much more commonplace in the future.

While there has been a lot of national conversation about whether virtual learning would ever take the place of classroom instruction, it seems that the several-month trial that was March, April, and May, may have put the argument to rest for a while. Faculty and students alike found it exhausting, challenging to navigate, and a pale substitute for real teacher/student interaction.

Maybe, most importantly, when this is all over we will realize that we took each other, and our daily interactions, for granted. How much did we all miss our colleagues? Our students? Our traditions and shared experiences?

At our opening football game this year we were struggling in the first quarter, and a parent turned to me and said, "I'm sorry you drove all the way here and we're not playing better." It was a beautiful night, and as I looked at our players, coaches, and cheerleaders who were engaged together in something that they love, and our students who were cheering on their friends, and our parents who were socializing and watching their children play for the first time in months, I realized how little that actually mattered.



STRENGTH OF INTELLECT
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

300 Park Road, Metairie, LA 70005

Metairie Park Country Day School enriches the lives of talented young people in a dynamic learning environment, building strength of intellect and strength of character within a community that is simultaneously challenging and supportive. Our students learn to be flexible, to be adaptable, and to face the challenges of life with honor, optimism, confidence, creativity, and a sense of humor.

2020-2021 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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