STATE OF THE SCHOOL REPORT | 2019







Dear Country Day Community,

As I reflect on the 2018-19 school year, I am proud of the resiliency of our community and grateful for the ingenuity, intentionality, and humor that are reflected in a Country Day education. Whether it's the chess team practicing each afternoon to finetune their game strategy or our history students using engineering software to design ancient buildings in 3D, our students are given the structure and flexibility to succeed. Country Day as an organization manifests these same traits as embedded in our mission statement. Indeed, our School continues to demonstrate a remarkable ability to *face life's challenges with honor, optimism, confidence, creativity, and a sense of humor*. I am proud of the way that we reflect, engage, and improve as we continue to create a welcoming community for thousands to thrive.

In this State of the School Report, you will learn how we scaffold challenge and support into our academic, athletic, and art-focused endeavors and how we celebrate what we learn. Tenth-grader Parker Piacun's artwork titled "Scarlet Macaws," featured in our recent AP/Honors Art Show and on the front cover, beautifully illustrates this scaffolding. To create her piece, Parker utilized printmaking techniques she honed at Country Day. With a vision in mind, she carved the surface of a block of wood, called a matrix, and applied ink. After pressing the ink to paper to create the first layer of the image, she stepped back to reflect on her work, received guidance from her teacher, modified her matrix, and applied a second layer of ink to her image. Layer upon layer of ink, reflection, guidance, planning, and a strong vision resulted in this masterpiece. This is just one way our students succeed in bringing great ideas to life.

Please take a moment to read our report. In doing so, learn about the myriad accomplishments of our students, catch a glimpse of the many innovative ideas that have defined Country Day since our founders' tenure, and learn from Head of School Matt Neely about our School's strategic vision for the future. It is a bright future indeed!

Sincerely,

Gerry Barousse, Jr.

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Chair, Board of Trustees



Longue Vue House and Gardens Archives

Academics BY HOWARD HUNTER, ACADEMIC DEAN

Country Day is nestled in Old Metairie, just far enough from Metairie Road that the uninitiated find it hidden. At one time the isolation was very real — the idea of a country day school was to liberate the mind by getting a child away from the distractions of urban life, in the same vein as a hilltop college. For most schools, this goal proved to be elusive; in our case, Old Metairie grew up around the school.

The myth of isolation persists, however, reinforced by traditions and rituals that give the impression to an outsider of a world unto itself, *sui generis* with its own sense of place. Schools with a strong sense of community do that, and the proof is with the fidelity of our alumni who come back and send us their children. Nevertheless, at times we do get caught up in our own world of A.P. classes, project-based learning, athletic events, and drama productions, and we have to make efforts to remind ourselves that we are an essential part of the New Orleans community.

Certainly, that was the case of our founders Edith and Edgar Stern. They could have led a life of relative ease, but instead, focused their efforts on civic reform and support of cultural institutions. Country Day, which they established in 1929, was a reflection of a modernist view; the school was to be a new way of educating, which is why they chose Ralph Boothby, an educational pioneer, to lead the school.

This modernist sensibility extended to politics, when in 1949 Mrs. Stern founded the Voters' Registration League, which worked to purge the rolls of dead voters (who had always been quite active in elections) and to register African-Americans. She eventually donated her extensive art collection to the New Orleans Museum of Art, which would be hardly recognizable today without the support she gave. Both she and Edgar (who had essentially established Dillard University in 1930), received the Times Picayune Loving Cup, he in 1931 and Mrs. Stern in 1964.

The fact that Mrs. Stern received distinguished awards from both the Jewish Community Center and the Archdiocese of New Orleans is a testament to her vision of an eclectic and tolerant community. The Stern legacy today is prodigious; they left a footprint on hospitals, schools, museums, the symphony, and in communication, starting the first television station in New Orleans, WDSU, in 1948. One of the family's less-recognized contributions was the commitment of the Stern Fund to block the proposed Riverfront Expressway in 1969, which would have destroyed the French Quarter from Decatur Street to the river.

Edith and Edgar Stern are a tough act to follow, but Country Day alumni have always been active in civic affairs, as well as in nonprofit sectors. Since Katrina, Country Day faculty have been especially engaged in cultural endeavors, giving talks to historical organizations, lecturing at the New Orleans Film Festival, playing in civic orchestras, acting in local theatre, showing original art, and presenting scholarly papers. Members of our faculty have also assumed leadership roles in cultural organizations such as the Dickens Festival, The Tennessee Williams Festival, the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, the Tulane Shakespeare Festival, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, and the Louisiana Historical Society.

New Orleans as place has inspired the whole Country Day community. In 2018 we began the year with a New Orleans at 300 conference with historian Lawrence Powell giving the keynote address, followed by a panel of luminaries: Carolyn Kolb, Marcia Kavanagh, John Magill, John Kemp, and Jason Berry, moderated by Emmy Award winner Tom Gregory. The event drew more than 300 people. For our All Community Event (ACE) Day, we commemorated the 300th through activities in New Orleans neighborhoods, built Chitimacha huts, and figured how to pump water from ground level to Founder's Terrace. Michael Skinkus, a fifth-grade history teacher and legendary percussionist, led a program on New Orleans music in the auditorium with piano professor Matt Lemmler, and CD alum Mick Berry on the drums.

Our students have long engaged the culture of the city in an attempt to understand the trends that have defined it. The WWNO radio program Tri-Pod ran stories for the tricentennial, and our students wrote, directed, produced, and narrated two spots: one on Catholicism and race with a story on St. Augustine Church, and the other on immigration highlighting the Vietnamese community in the city.

Thanks to the generosity of the LaCorte family, we are able to support a summer program for faculty study. Fellows Vanesa Gentinetta and Jenny Irwin created an exhaustive database of New Orleans and South Louisiana sites that are essential for all Country Day graduates to visit. These include popular destinations such as state museums and more obscure landmarks such as the LSU Center for River Studies in Baton Rouge, which houses a 10,000-square-foot model of the lower Mississippi that monitors coastal erosion at the mouth of the river.

We are a New Orleans school, and we continue to reflect this in the work we do inside as well as outside of 300 Park Road. With all modesty, we think Edith and Edgar Stern would approve.



The Arts by katie antis, arts department chair

What does it mean to participate in the Arts at Country Day?

It means that our students, faculty, and staff are exploring daily, excited each minute, and engaging each second in more than 50 different art-related activities throughout the year. Students presented three major art shows in the Georges Art Gallery this past year and participated in more than 15 musical and theatrical productions. In addition, our student artists and musicians ventured off campus to contribute to art exhibits such as *Art in Bloom* at the New Orleans Museum of Art, and students crafted ceramic soup bowls to share with the Salvation Army during the Souper Bowl Gala. Musicians and singers were selected to perform at the district and state levels, and several artists placed nationally in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.

In 2018, more than 40 upper school students were involved in the spring musical production of the "solve-it-yourself" musical murder mystery *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, in which the audience helps determine the outcome of the mystery with a different ending produced each night of the nine-show run. This was followed by the fall Shakespeare performance of *Love's Labour's Lost*, in which a student actor enunciated "honorificabilitudinitatibus," the longest word in the English language. In addition, middle schoolers delighted audiences with their productions of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, *The Wind in the Willows*, and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

The Upper School Advanced Chorale has more than 55 singers this academic year, and 14 of those students are also in the more select Small Vocal Ensemble. They have already been involved in performances at open houses, Grandfriends' Day, and our Winter Choral Concert. That number grows to more than 150 when middle school singers are included.

More than 90 students perform in the middle and upper school band and orchestra. The spring concert was based on the theme "Life is an Adventure" and featured classical, jazz, and popular pieces that took listeners on a worldwide adventure.

Lower School students are always busy creating and performing. This year's Grandfriends' Day musical was titled, *I'm Gonna Let It Shine*, and featured the songs and stories of the Civil Rights Era. The students participated in a special collaborative project in which they wrote essays about important figures from the

civil rights movement and created a portrait of them that hung in Weinmann Auditorium during the performance. Our Lower School string students had a chance to perform with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra in January and Lower School band students provided the music for the Krewe of PMK's Mardi Gras parade in February. Little Group, an ensemble of select singers in the fourth and fifth grades, also brought home superior ratings for its performances at the district and state choral festivals in the spring.

Lower School students also shined in the Kindergarten Merry Meeting performance of *Things I Love About Louisiana*, which was a special treat for their senior buddies, who performed it as their Kindergarten Merry Meeting musical 13 years ago! Lower Schoolers also enchanted everyone with their magical holiday program in the atrium.

Not to be outdone, Country Day's student artists packed the gallery for two middle and upper school art shows as well as one Lower School show featuring painting, drawing, ceramics, photography, woodworking, metals, film, and many collaborative pieces that utilize tools and techniques that are available in the Engineering Lab. Many of our Upper School students pursue Honors Art or even AP Studio Art with an individualized focus that is developed in cooperation with their studio teacher. One of the most special pieces of 2018 was the Tricentennial Necklace. Middle and upper school metals students crafted this beautiful necklace to celebrate the New Orleans tricentennial. Upper School students created the small, intricate links, and Middle School students created the pendants, each with 10 small circles to signify each decade.

Finally, the highlight for many of our Upper School artists and performers is the trip to the ISAS Arts Festival, which was held at Hockaday School in Dallas in 2018. Country Day brought 46 actors, artists, vocalists, instrumentalists, and many students who participated in multiple events and venues. This is always a wonderful way to showcase our own work as well as to receive constructive feedback from professionals. However, everyone agrees that the best part is meeting the artists, musicians, and actors from other schools and collaborating with them on new and impromptu pieces. We look forward to attending the 2019 ISAS Arts Festival at St. Stephen's Episcopal School in Austin.









2018
VOLLEYBALL STATE
CHAMPIONS

DISTRICT CHAMPIONS

in Boys' Cross Country,
Football,
Volleyball,
Boys' Basketball,
Boys' Soccer, Girls' Soccer,
and Golf!

19
LHSAA
SCHOLAR-ATHLETES

Athletics

SCHOLAR-ATHLETE HONORS

LHSAA ACADEMIC ALL-STATE:

Baseball: 1 Team Member Boys' Basketball: 1 Team Member

Girls' Basketball: 1 Team Member

Boys' Cross Country: 2 Team Members

Girls' Cross Country: 2 Team Members

Football: 1 Team Member Boys' Golf: 1 Team Member

Girls' Soccer: 1 Team Member Boys' Tennis: 1 Team Member

Girls' Tennis: 2 Team Members

Boys' Track & Field: 1 Team Member

Girls' Track & Field: 4 Team Members

Volleyball: 1 Team Member

LHSAA COMPOSITE ACADEMIC ALL-STATE:

Boys' Golf: 1 Team Member Boys' Tennis: 1 Team Member

FRIDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL **SCHOLAR-ATHLETE:**

1Team Member

FALL SPORTS

CROSS COUNTRY:

BOYS:

3rd in State

District Champions

District MVP

GIRLS:

6th in State

FOOTBALL:

Lost in Class 2A/Division III Semi-Finals

District Champions

District Offense MVP

District Defense MVP

District Coach of the Year

The Advocate Player of the Week: 1 Team Member

Nola.com Player of the Week: 1 Team Member

Nola.com All-Metro Team: 4 Team Members

Nola.com All-Metro Offensive Player of the Year

Nola.com All-Metro Defensive Player of the Year

Nola.com All- Metro Coach of the Year

LSWA Class 2A All State Team: 3 Team Members

LSWA Class 2A Coach of the

Friday Night Football Player of the Year

GNOSF/Quarterback Club Player of the Year

SWIMMING:

ROYS.

22nd in State (only one male swimmer)

GIRLS:

9th in State

3rd in 100yd Backstroke

VOLLEYBALL:

State Champions

Undefeated District Champions

State Championship Player of the Game

LVCA Division V All-State: 4 Team Members

LVCA Division V Coach of the

Advocate All-Metro Small Schools Team: 3 Team Members

Nola.com All-Metro Small Schools Team: 3 Team

Members

WINTER SPORTS

BASKETBALL

Lost in Class 2A/Division III Semi-Finals

District Champions

GIRLS:

Lost in Class 2A/Division III Regionals

SOCCER:

BOYS:

Lost in Division IV Regionals

District Champions

District Offensive MVP

District Coach of the Year

All-State Team: 1 Team Member

All-Star Team: 1 Team Member

The Advocate All-Metro Team: 1 Team Member

GIRLS:

Lost in Division IV Quarterfinals

District Champions

District MVP

All-Metro Team: 1 Team

Member

All-Star Team: 2 Team Members

All-State Team: 2 Team

Members

All-State Defensive MVP

SPRING SPORTS

BASEBALL:

2nd in District

District Coach of the Year

GOLF:

6th in State

1st in Regionals

District Champions

SOFTBALL:

3rd in District

TENNIS:

BOYS:

12th in State

2nd in Regionals

Regionals Doubles' Champions

GIRLS:

9th in State

2nd in Regionals

TRACK & FIELD:

3rd in District

1st in Long Jump

1st in 3200

7th in Regionals

1st in 400m

State

3rd in Long Jump

GIRLS:

2nd in District

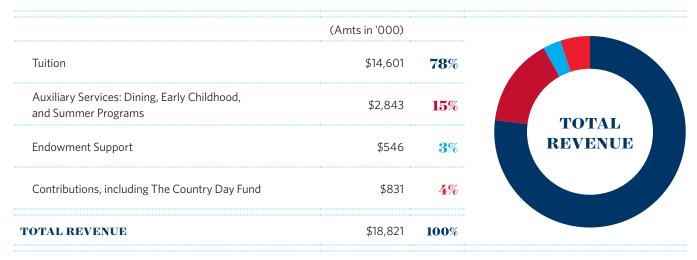
1st in 800m

1st in 1600m

Financial Statement 2017-18

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

Metairie Park Country Day School has an annual operating budget of \$18.8 million. The annual operating budget is funded through four major sources: Tuition, Auxiliary Services (Dining, Early Childhood, Summer Programs), charitable giving via Annual Fund, and annual endowment support.



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 | \$12,656 | 67 % |
| Instructional and Student Support Programming | \$1,404 | 8% |
| Financial Aid | \$1,188 | 6% |
| General and Administrative | \$1,578 | 8% |
| Plant Operations, including Major Repair and Maintenance | \$1,995 | 11% |
| OTAL EXPENSES | \$18,821 | 100% |



Paul Morse Photography for The Scout Guide New Orleans

Development

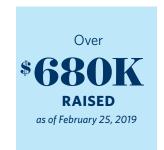
THE 2018-2019 COUNTRY DAY FUND*

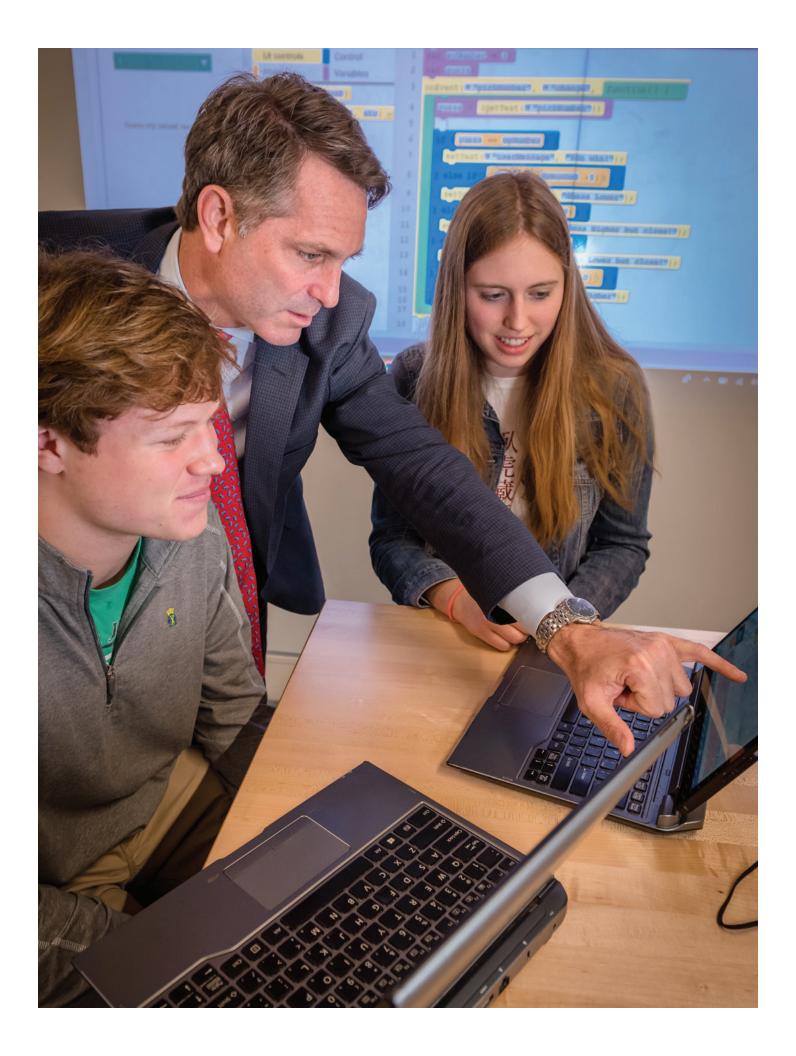
Thanks to our generous donors and 100+ volunteers, this year's Country Day Fund campaign is off to a great start.











Looking Forward BY MATT NEELY, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry once said, "A goal without a plan is just a wish." Whether you're a fan of the French writer, poet, and journalist or not, most of us agree that planning for the future is essential. In my 25-plus years in education, I have seen how planning, and following that plan each day, can produce exceptional programming, projects, ideas, and institutions. The creation of the new Department of Applied Technology, innovative faculty-designed learning spaces in the Science and Engineering Building and in the Art and Lower School Science Building, and a continued commitment to our tradition of forming students with intellect and character reinforce my commitment to planning, executing, and celebrating our myriad achievements.

As we celebrate Country Day's 90th year, I want to ensure that our exceptional students are afforded the vast opportunities our world offers, today and for the next century. After countless hours studying best practices and using the collective wisdom of so many in our community, Country Day now has a new strategic vision that incorporates seven key areas:

- » Academic innovation
- » Teaching and learning
- » Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- » CD in the community
- » Growth
- » Resource allocation
- >> Individual pursuits

Other areas of emphasis may arise over the years, but because it is so vital that we "know where we are going," these seven areas or pillars will serve as measuring posts of our school's success.

Academic Innovation

Academic innovation is the cornerstone of a Country Day education. Whether the creation of the multifaceted service opportunities to enhance the civic engagement of our students or our ability to fuse disciplines and divisions during Hour of Code Week to enhance our students' computational thinking and problem-solving, Country Day is at the forefront of innovation. However, when we step away from the "how," how we teach, and look toward the "what," what we teach, there is always room for study.

Country Day has consistently taken this concerted look at our curriculum and program throughout our history. About 20 years ago, faculty members saw the need for a class that centered on current events through a mix of art, music, religion, and philosophy lessons and lectures. Our Humanities class was created to skillfully balanced just that. More recently, faculty members from the Department of Applied Technology saw the need for students to have a stronger foundation in computational thinking, Pre-K through 12th grade. Within one year, best practices were studied, a leading computer science curriculum was implemented, and formal instruction was scaffolded throughout lower, middle, and upper school. The big ideas of computer science are introduced in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade through creative coding classes and the blossoming design challenge program in lower school. As part of these changes, a Computer Science Principles course was introduced in upper school to augment the existing A.P. Computer Science course.

Moving forward, we will continue to ask, "What do our students need to learn to be effective, thoughtful, caring citizens of the world? Can we innovate in our curriculum? A great school never sits still.

Teaching & Learning

As we assess what we teach our students, we also need to ask how we teach them. What techniques do we use? How do we know the difference between good teaching, great teaching, and the best teaching?

As an academic institution, these are the questions we must ask ourselves to ensure that our teaching practices meet the needs of our students today and will continue to do so in the future. To do this, we must look within our school to ensure our faculty, staff, and students have the support to learn and grow. We must also look outside our school at outstanding academic institutions and organizations locally, nationally, and worldwide. By doing so, we align best practices and research to create a framework for moving forward.

This pedagogical examination does not happen without an intentional, concerted effort. This is one reason our reinvented faculty professional learning time is so vital. This time allows our faculty to continue learning and researching to hone our craft. After only six months, we can already begin to see the fruits of these efforts. Take for example work being done by teacher Abby Birdsall. Birdsall wanted to ensure that the way she taught writing to her third- and fourth-grade students followed best practices but also worked within the third- and fourth-grade schedule. Using the research of renowned education experts Nancy Atwell, Lucy Calkins, Jennifer Sarravallo, and Gretchen Bernabei, Birdsall created a series of structured lessons that reflect the best practices she learned and fit into her class schedule.

We are also seeing this with the way Middle School Spanish teacher Courtney Twitchell is integrating Spanish instruction and live video conversations with students in Peru. Twitchell regularly arranges "interviews" between her students and students in Peru. These sessions teach her students not only about conversational etiquette, vocabulary, and grammar, but also about cultural norms in South America. Seeing these conversations in action is simply remarkable.

We know our teaching and student learning is outstanding. This domain gives us the structure to "sharpen the saw" and vigorously pursue continuous improvement.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Country Day has always had a focus on diversity. During the 2017-18 academic year, the name of this strategic goal has broadened to better reflect our work at the board, faculty, alumni, and student levels. Country Day also named a faculty coordinator of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and then named faculty facilitators at the lower, middle, and upper school levels. These colleagues have joined together to move many exciting initiatives forward.

Our progress is palpable. The Lower School DEI facilitator recently announced a third Lower School parent meeting where parents are able to share their dreams for a diverse, equitable, and inclusive lower school environment. The DEI Committee also sponsored a News Literacy Panel where a distinguished panel of professionals from the journalism field, specifically from The Advocate newspaper, NPR, and WDSU news, answered tough questions such as, "How does the need to obtain ratings, advertising, shares, or likes impact your work?" or "As media producers, what do you feel you owe your audience?" Progress continues as our school leads efforts within the independent school community, as students continue to take leadership roles in the DEI programming, and as our parents and alumni continue to share their thoughts and feedback for short- and long-term plans. These are just some of the many examples of the strides we have made in this critical and ongoing work.

CD in the Community

As Academic Dean Howard Hunter so eloquently shared in his piece on Academics, Country Day has always had a place in our local community, as well as regionally and nationally. We send students on carefully coordinated trips to learn Louisiana history, wetlands management, or the causes of World War II. More, we bring local leaders onto campus for lunch and discussion through our Business Advisory Council or as guest speakers for classes or assemblies. Country Day can continue to be the leader in bringing our community together which will enrich relationships, programs, and learning on and off campus.

Moving forward, however, we need to further solidify and expand our role in the greater New Orleans community. It was just such a relationship that led to the start of our AP Computer

Science Class in 2013 and to countless internships, and later jobs, for our seniors. Just as Ralph Boothby set out each year to visit John Dewey, our students need to be given the opportunity to set out and establish authentic connections that will serve them while at Country Day and after. I am energized by the possibilities and connections work in this domain will bring.

Growth

Since the school has returned to its pre-Katrina size, it is time again to reexamine population growth, demand for our wonderful school, and the best environment for our students' learning. Do we continue to grow as demand increases for spots at our school? What exactly does responsible growth for our school look like? All of these questions are currently being discussed at the board level as we look toward our centennial and beyond.

Resource Allocation

As we examine our student body size and composition, we must also assess how we allocate our outstanding facilities and staff to the right spaces and functions? This is a question every school asks itself daily, monthly, and yearly. Naturally, we aim to maximize our assets and resources for the student experience.

To assist in this realm, our board of trustees has initiated a master planning process that is now officially underway with the selection of WGM Design, Inc. WGM Design will aid in creating a multi-decade master plan for our school. To date, the firm has completed planning and building projects for more than 40 independent schools and colleges and won numerous awards for its design and planning work. We look forward to the expertise and direction WGM Design can offer our school as we design our future.

Individual Pursuits / Student Wellness

Are we creating the kind of school where students and adults can pursue their goals? Are we offering a pursuit of excellence while balancing the needs and wants of our students and their parents? Are our students learning the ethical and social-emotional skills required for the future?

As we strive to offer a balance of rigor and support, we must tackle these difficult questions. The first step to addressing these questions is to ensure that our school has a support network in place to absorb the stresses of change and challenge presented to our students - a defined social-emotional and character development program.

Last year, faculty and administrative time was allocated to researching, determining, and integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) into classrooms, Pre-K through 12th grade. Country Day's lower school decided to utilize resources offered by CASEL and Lions Quest in hopes of not only further developing their quality SEL program but also preparing students for the social-emotional work that will occur later in middle and upper school. To build upon the work being done in lower school and using the data collected through four years of participation in the Mission Skills Assessment, a tool that measures students' development in six noncognitive skills (creativity, curiosity, ethics, resilience, teamwork, and time management), the middle school helped lead the effort to employ the Lions Quest program. The Upper School builds on this foundation through its implementation of the High Resolves program. High Resolves offers a personalized curriculum on citizenship and leadership to help build these core competencies in our students.

These programs beautifully augment the existing, holistic approach to character development already occurring at Country Day through our family-style lunch program, participation in service projects, leadership opportunities offered through the Student Senate and more than 20 clubs, and through the thousands of teachable moments that show our dedication to our honor code and mission.

The Future

The future never looked so bright. With our strategic vision in place, the support and expertise of our board, faculty, and staff, and a continued balance between tradition and innovation, intellect and character, we are poised to celebrate our 100th year (in 2029) in the finest of form.

Of course, this visioning, planning, and executing relies on clarity of purpose and the ongoing support of our broad community from parents, to alumni, to faculty, to students. I thank you in advance for your support of this vision and your love of Country Day. Geaux Cajuns!



STRENGTH OF INTELLECT STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

300 Park Road, Metairie, LA 70005



On the front cover: "Scarlet Macaws" by Parker Piacun, grade 10



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.

2018-2019 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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> Treasurer Mrs. Robyn Schwarz

Secretary Mr. Odom Heebe, Jr. 1985

> Head of School Mr. Matt Neely

Parents' Association President Mrs. Sherri O'Bell

Dads' Club President Mr. John Schwing, Sr. 1982

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Past Chair Mr. Andrew Weinstock Faculty Trustee Mrs. Katie Antis

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Mrs. Jennifer Heebe

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Mr. John Little III 1962

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