

David Mahler Educational Philosophy Statement

For centuries we have understood the importance of educating the next generation. As the educational landscape continuously evolves, becoming more complicated, complex, competitive and sophisticated, it is important to remain focused on the primary function of any school – providing the best possible education for its students. Each day should be filled with relevant, creative, engaging, and meaningful learning opportunities and experiences for every child we serve. As educators we must inspire, empower, support, and challenge our students to thrive in a dynamic, increasingly interdependent, and rapidly changing environment where the only constant is change. Great schools embrace this immense and compelling challenge.

Independent schools were built upon the premise that exceptional faculty will inspire their students to pursue their intellectual passions in college and beyond. Each of us can identify the amazing teachers that made a transformational impact on our life. These dedicated professionals create "magic" in their classrooms each and every day. Everyone learns, everyone wants to learn, and everyone is fully committed to doing their best work. They motivate students to pursue and accomplish things that they did not believe were possible. The best faculty recognize that the meaningful and lasting relationships they build with their students is their most important legacy. There is no doubt that this essential, impactful, and inspirational work is what lured me to the world of education. Great schools value, promote, and nurture excellent teaching.

Since their inception, independent schools have been models of classroom autonomy providing faculty with the freedom to imagine, design, and deliver the curriculum. While the success of this unique, de-centralized approach is evident, increased expectations for both quality and continuity of the educational program are changing the operating culture of our schools. Communication, collaboration, and teaming are important new skills that must be put into practice in order to realize the true, full potential of a fourteen-year educational experience. From composition to core values, a talented faculty without a thoughtfully defined, developed and implemented curriculum, cannot provide the continuity, or quality of experience, that our children deserve. Great schools coordinate, refine, and continuously enhance their programs to maximize their educational impact.

As educators we have a responsibility to provide meaningful challenges for our students in the classroom, on the athletic field, on stage, and in the community. We should celebrate their successes and embrace the powerful teachable moments that accompany moments of struggle and failure. Our school communities need to find a healthy balance between challenge and support. Furthermore, treating everyone with respect while modeling and upholding the principles and values of a just society is essential work. Encouraging young people to respond to conflict and adversity with knowledge, civility, and integrity is a responsibility that all educators must embrace. Plutarch said, “a mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled.” Great schools will empower the next generation to transcend the unforeseen and immense challenges of the future with character, confidence, and resolve.