

Update on LEARNS Act Tuition Vouchers

The Arkansas LEARNS Act, enacted in 2023, introduced and authorized Education Freedom Account (EFA) tuition vouchers that families may use to help pay for private school tuition. Episcopal Collegiate School is a participating school with the Arkansas Department of Education in this tuition voucher program. Below is some important information for families to know about tuition vouchers for the 2025/26 school year.

- After a two-year phase in which only certain families were eligible, all Kindergarten – 12th grade students are eligible to receive a voucher for the 2025/26 school year.
- Applications for an **EFA Voucher** are made through the Arkansas Department of Education. Applications are expected to open March 3, and should remain open as long as the program has financial capacity to accept students. The capacity of the program is not known at this time, as it is dependent upon the state legislature's budgeting process. Families are encouraged to submit their application early.
- The value of a voucher for the 2025/26 school year is expected to be \$6,995 with a 1.85% administrative fee making the net value \$6,865, which can be used to help pay tuition at Episcopal.

Questions about the EFA voucher program can be addressed to the Department of Education at ade.efa@ade.arkansas.gov.

Dr. Gay Visit- Friday, January 24

Aligned with our Episcopal identity and commitment to nurturing an inclusive school community, we are delighted to welcome Dr. Derrick Gay back to campus next Friday, January 24.

During his visit, Dr. Gay will engage students, faculty, staff, and administration in meaningful conversations that support this important aspect of our mission. He will be speaking in Middle and Upper School Chapel from 9:25-10:00, followed by leading a Middle School Assembly from 10:15-11:00. In the assembly, he will explore how jokes that go too far, use offensive language, or target individual traits can hurt feelings and harm relationships. Later, he will meet with the Upper School Diversity Council during "flex time" from 12:05-12:45, and speak in Lower School Chapel from 2:15-3:10. As always, parents are warmly invited to attend chapel services. He will conclude his day leading conversations with our faculty and staff from 3:45-4:30.

Snow Day Pictures for Yearbook

Did you capture moments of fun with your students and friends during the recent snow? If so, please share it with us for the yearbook! See image below for a QR code that allows you to upload pictures directly to the staff.



Parents' Auxiliary Valentine's Day Cookie Buffet

Parents' Auxiliary is excited to host our annual Valentine's Day Cookie Buffet on Thursday, February 13, for our amazing faculty and staff! To make this event a success, we're asking parents to donate cookies and baked goods to show our appreciation for our teachers, coaches, and staff! Use the [link here](#) to sign up, and thank you for supporting this faculty favorite tradition.

Lauren Dake

Teacher Appreciation Committee

Reminder- Parents' Auxiliary Meeting

January 31, 2025, at 8:00 am in the Middle School Erwin Library *Please note the change of meeting location from the last Wildcat Weekly.

French E Auction- February 22, 2025

Buy your tickets today!

Free Tuition Raffle Tickets

We are excited to announce that raffle tickets for a chance to win **free tuition for the 2025-2026 school year** are now available for purchase! This exclusive opportunity is part of our upcoming **French E Auction 2025**, and all proceeds will support our school community.

Tickets are available for just \$100 each, and the winner will be drawn during the auction event on Saturday, February 22. Don't miss your chance to secure this incredible prize!

Our amazing French E Auction committee is selling tickets, and you may also purchase during Middle and Upper School carpool on the following dates.

- February 6
- February 11

Please contact Hannah, Alicia, or Claire in the Advancement office about raffle ticket information as well. You may purchase your ticket with cash or check.

A Note from Mrs. Schuhmacher

Next week Dr. Gay will join us for our 1st-5th grade chapel on Friday, January 24, at 2:15pm. Please note that we will not have our regular chapel on Wednesday. We hope you can join us as Dr. Gay shares his stories and lessons celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Good luck to our PSL basketball players in their games this weekend and good luck to our RoboCats as they compete in the Bethel Winter Bash Tournament in Alexander on Saturday. Go, Wildcats!

See you back in the Lower School on Tuesday. Enjoy the long weekend!

Catherine Schuhmacher
Head of Lower School

Christmas Program Survey

We would love to hear your thoughts on the timing of our Christmas programs. In the past, these programs have been scheduled at 9:00 AM, 1:30 PM, and 6:00 PM. However, we've noticed that the 6:00 PM program can be challenging for families and

students due to other commitments and the long day it creates. As we consider the possibility of discontinuing the evening program, we want to understand how this change might affect our families. Your input is crucial in helping us make the best decision for everyone. **Please complete survey here!**

Valentine Cookie Buffet for Teachers

Each year parents provide cookies to show their love for teachers. **Sign up to donate cookies here!**

Attention 5th Grade Parents

All 5th grade parents received an email earlier this week regarding picture needs for upcoming projects. Please have your pictures submitted to Meredith Linder by 1/31. Thank you for your assistance!

Chapel News

In Godly Play this week students learned about the sacrament of Holy Baptism and took a candle home to remember that the light of Christ is in each of us. Next week, we'll learn about how God cares for each one of us through the parable of the Good Shepherd in Godly Play.

In our PreK and Kindergarten chapels we read Baptized in the Water: Becoming a member of God's Family by Glenys Nellist. In our Community Chapel, Dr. House spoke to us about the difference between active and passive kindness - ask your student how they have been actively kind this week!

Next week in PreK and Kindergarten chapels we'll read The Lost Sheep and in community chapel we'll hear from Dr. Gay. NOTE DIFFERENT COMMUNITY CHAPEL DAY AND TIME BELOW.

Wednesday, January 22

- PreK 4: 8:20-8:40am, Braunfisch-Stella Boyle Smith Library
- PreK 3: 8:50-9:10am, Braunfisch-Stella Boyle Smith Library
- Kindergarten: 9:20-9:50am, Braunfisch-Stella Boyle Smith Library

Friday, January 24

- 1st-5th: 2:15-3:00pm, Erwin Performance Hall & Gymnasium

Grace & Peace,

Michelle Moore
Interim Lower School Chaplain

Pride Patrol- January 21-24

Pride Patrol is a leadership opportunity for our 4th and 5th grade students. These students should arrive by 7:30 am, help open car doors, welcome students, and walk our youngest Wildcats to their classrooms. Pride Patrol student leaders next week include:

- Claire Canada
- Caroline Carmichael
- Claire Causey
- Louise Clark
- Baker Dare
- Graves Dement

Looking Ahead

- January 20 | MLK Jr. Day - No School
- February 14-17 | Mid-Winter Break - No School
- March 24-28 | Spring Break - No School

Quick Links

Lower School Live News

Find the **LS Calendar** here.

A Note from Dr. McCormick

Dear Middle School Families,

We have had a solid week of teaching and learning in middle school. We have encouraged students to put their best foot forward, as the start of a semester represents

a fresh start for all. Additionally, we welcomed Mr. Rodney Poole, a drug and alcohol prevention counselor who has visited our middle school for each of the past 11 years, to campus this week. Eighth grade students had the privilege of meeting with Mr. Poole for three, smaller group sessions over the course of the week to talk about healthy behaviors related to alcohol and drug use, and Mr. Poole also had one session with each of our sixth and seventh graders. He also did a session for Episcopal parents on Thursday morning and gave a chapel talk to our 6-12 community on Tuesday morning.

Middle School Athlete of the Week- 8th Grade Cheerleader Isabella Hargrave

Coach Melissa Wilson had this to say in her nomination: "*When Dr. McCormick asked me to nominate an athlete of the week, I knew it wasn't going to be easy. There are so many cheerleaders that I could recognize, but there is one that really stood out to me, not just from this Winter season, but all year.*

This athlete is new to our cheer team and she has given it her all. When looking back at attendance over the course of the football and basketball seasons, she hasn't missed a practice or game and I'm sure would be one of the first to volunteer if I needed anyone at other games. She has fun on the sidelines with her teammates, she cheers on her Wildcats, and it has been a joy to watch her skills and confidence grow! Congratulations, Isabella Hargrave!"

Thank you for sharing your children with us!

Chuck McCormick

Health Screenings

We will start our Health Screenings for 6th and 8th graders and all new students to Episcopal in MS and US, Tuesday, January 21. It will take several weeks to complete. Nurse Rawn and Nurse Hopkins will start with those students that are in PE first. We will not screen students on dress uniform days. Screenings will include: Vision, hearing, BP, height, weight, and scoliosis for 6th and 8th girls and scoliosis for 8th grade boys.

Please remind your student(s) to bring or wear their glasses or contacts for the vision portion of the screening. Scoliosis screenings will be performed using privacy of the Middle School Health Room or the girl's locker room in the gym. Girls need to wear or bring a sports bra or tank top for the scoliosis screening as shirts are removed to observe the back. When performing the scoliosis test, the back is visible to the observers. The student will stand straight with hands to the side, then they will bend forward and the scoliometer will be used. The student's skeletal frame will be observed from all sides. Both nurses will be present for scoliosis screenings.

- If your child is under the care of a physician for scoliosis please let the school nurse know before Tuesday, January 21
- If your child is under the care of a physician for scoliosis and it has been greater than 1 year since their last appointment, please follow-up with the physician and send the school nurse the upcoming appointment date and time
- If you do not want your child screened for scoliosis at school, and they are not currently under the care of a physician for scoliosis, you will need to get a current scoliosis evaluation from their physician and turn the report into Nurse Hopkins no later than March 1, 2025. When you make the doctor's appointment, please send the confirmation appointment date and time to the school nurse by Tuesday, January 21 at 8:00 AM, so they will not be screened for scoliosis

*Parents will receive a referral letter for further testing if there is an issue detected as a result of the screenings. **Please contact Nurse Hopkins** if you have any questions or concerns.

A Note from Dr. Graham

Thank you for helping us make last Thursday's half-day a success. My teammates and I were glad to return safely to campus on Monday and have a five-day week of teaching and learning. Building our school routines and making steady progress from last semester is our collective focus right now. Our students are now hitting their second-semester stride, and we look forward to "locking in" over the next several weeks. A special shoutout to our 11th graders who started their in-house SAT prep course this week. Also, please be on the lookout in next week's installment of the Wildcat Weekly for information about the special dress themes for our Winter Spirit Week, which is set for Monday, February 3 to Friday, February 7th, with our annual Winter Dance scheduled for the evening of Saturday, February 8th.

See you soon,

Kellen

Updates, Reminders, and Action Items

Contact Us if Your Child is Absent, Late, or Checking Out

Parents, if your child is absent from or will arrive late to school for any reason, or if they need to check out during the school day, it is imperative that you contact the School and let us know. If your child is absent, please either call us in the Main Office at **501-372-1194 ext. 3** and leave us a detailed message or email Selby Boyd at **sboyd@episcopalcollegiate.org**. Upper School students are expected to

communicate any known absences with their teachers, coaches, and advisor in advance. Parents, we also expect to hear directly from you any time your child is absent.

College Admissions Case Studies Workshop- Saturday, January 25, from 8:45 am - 2:45 pm.

Admission deans from Agnes Scott College, Florida State University, Rhodes College, University of California - Santa Cruz, University of Tulsa, and Williams College will bring their expertise and wisdom of the college admission process to juniors and their families of Episcopal Collegiate School and Arkansas Commitment on Saturday, January 25th from 8:45-2:45. Lunch will be provided.

Juniors and their families should **RSVP by Friday, January 17th**

Upcoming College Visits

All juniors and seniors are invited to attend the college meetings on our campus. Sign up for these meetings in **SCOIR** under "Visits & Deadlines" & bring your Green College Visit Permission Slip to the College Counseling Office.

Save the Date: January 23, at 11:05 - University of Arkansas

The University of Arkansas is a large, public research university located in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The U of A has over 27,000 undergraduate students and 103 academic majors to choose from. The most popular majors include Business, Marketing, Nursing, Psychology, and Biology. There are almost 400 student organizations to join at the U of A, and popular ones include Student Government, Greek Life, Outdoors Activities, and more. Arkansas competes in the NCAA Division 1 and offers special ticket deals to students. Go Razorbacks!

Coming up Next Week

- Monday, 1/20 - MLK Day (No School)
- Wednesday 1/22 - Phone Free Day in Upper School
- Wednesday, 1/22 - Football Parent Meeting
 - If your son plans to or is considering playing football next year, I encourage you to attend our football parent meeting on Wednesday, January 22, at 5:30 p.m., in Upper School 215. The growth of our football program is a school priority, and we appreciate the chance to partner with you to prepare for next season. Coach Simpson, our new Strength and

Conditioning Coach, will outline our newly structured strength and conditioning program. Some of the topics we will cover on Wednesday are:

- Introduction of Kord Simpson, our new Strength and Conditioning Coach
- Football off-season programs
- Spring/Summer schedule
- 2025 season schedule
- Chapel Schedule:
 - Tue, 1/21 - Father Rob
 - Wed, 1/22 - Stephen Nichols '25
 - Thur, 1/23 - Ro Waymack '25
 - Fri, 1/24 - Dr. Derrick Gay

Athletics Schedule:

- **Athletics Schedule** Let's go, Wildcats!

Service Opportunities:

We will share **new service opportunities** for our students as they come to us.

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Beyond Next Week (Mark Your Calendars)

- College Admissions Case Studies Workshop - Saturday, Jan. 25
- Drugs & Alcohol Education for Upper School Students - Monday, Jan. - Friday, Feb. 1
- Family Night - Wednesday, Jan 29
- Winter Spirit Week - Monday, Feb. 3 - Friday, Feb. 7
- All-School Pep Rally - Friday, Feb. 7
- Winter Dance (Theme: "Emerald City") - Saturday, Feb. 8
- Pancake Supper (Sponsored by Class of '26) - Tuesday, Feb. 11
- Class of '24 Valentine Lunch - Thursday, Feb. 13
- Winter Break - Friday, Feb. 14 - Monday, Feb. 17
- Parents' Auxiliary Auction - Saturday, Feb. 22
- End of 3rd Quarter - Friday, Feb. 28
- Fine Arts Showcase - Monday, March 3
- Spring Conference Day - Friday, March 7

Episcopal Wildcats Hudl Page

Wildcat Athletics has moved live streaming to the Episcopal Collegiate Hudl Fan Page. This page includes a live stream of events as well as highlights, team schedules, and rosters.

Episcopal Wildcats Hudl Page

Please note, we will no longer be using the Episcopal Athletics Youtube Page.

The Hudl Fan App is supported by Roku TV, Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV, and Android TV.

Go, Wildcats!