
SUPPORTING

GREAT TEACHING

for the 21st Century

As I observe our faculty in action, I marvel daily at the quality of their work, as well as their work ethic.

They create activities for learning, navigate students' individual needs and build transformative relationships that inspire a lifelong love of learning. St. Stephen's faculty members guide, teach, mentor, advise and coach students from dusk until dawn. And then they get up and do it all again the next day.

Our teachers are content masters, relational experts, constant learners, tireless workers, partners with parents, collaborative colleagues, dignity agents, and promoters of joy and hope. They also have strong character and endeavor daily to uphold our founders' vision for a school community focused on high academic standards, progressive social values and thoughtful service to others.

As I continue to study effective teaching tools and techniques and reflect on the work of successful independent schools in the 21st century, I have come to believe that educational relevance is central to great teaching and better learning. Great teachers continually reflect on the quality of their work and adjust their professional practices to ensure that the classroom experiences they offer students are relevant to the skills and talents they will need to thrive far into the future.

The best teachers boldly and regularly ask: What is the ideal approach and plan for my students... Is this coursework relevant to their futures... What should we add or take away from the lesson to make it most relevant... Is there a better way? Our teachers continually seek to answer these important questions and prepare our students for successful futures in an ever-changing global economy.

Further, the school's comprehensive strategic planning process, which has enabled our school community to closely examine what we stand for, which programs and practices allow us to fulfill our mission, and what strategic drivers should shape our school's future. As with our innovation grant initiative, central to the strategic planning process is a desire to enhance the St. Stephen's experience for our students. Not content with the status quo, our faculty and administrators continue to do the hard work of self-reflection that began three years ago with a comprehensive Self Study conducted for our ISAS and SAES reaccreditation. As a result, we are as committed as ever to academic excellence and intellectual inquiry, student diversity, equity and inclusion, our Episcopal Identity, social justice and service to others — and to offering Spartans truly transformative experiences in the classroom and across campus.

Throughout it all, we continue to seek new ways to create meaningful classroom experiences for our students, boldly exploring the most appropriate and innovative ways that we can prepare today's Spartans to live lives of meaning and significance.

— CHRISTOPHER L. GUNNIN, HEAD OF SCHOOL