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# FROM THE HILL *to the world*

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The end of each school year is always the perfect time to reflect on the journey our students have taken, admire their engagement and achievements, and imagine what they are ready for next. As educators we routinely review and mark the growth of our students. But the close of the year brings a new recognition of the remarkable intellectual, physical, social and emotional growth of each one of our students. As such, we quickly turn our attention forward to envision what new challenges they might be ready to take on.

This exercise of looking both backward and ahead is never more powerful than when examining the changes in our graduates. The athletic banquet, final fine arts performances, senior retreat, end-of-year awards ceremony, baccalaureate service and graduation ceremony all give us the opportunity to pause and reflect on each student's unique journey while on The Hill. With great pride in their efforts and achievements and with tremendous hope for their futures, we cannot help but imagine the lives of our graduates, in college and beyond. Indeed, the Class of 2018 embodies the highest ideals of St. Stephen's, as reflected in our school prayer: "...Seeing our life as a journey together, empower us to make a difference in the world, with open minds, open hearts and open doors."

The act of looking back in time to remind ourselves of our history, coupled with immediate planning for the future, occurs on an institutional level as well. This year our school was actively involved in an in-depth strategic planning process. Every stakeholder group in our community was invited to participate in core values exercises that served to define who we are, collectively, as a school, at our core. We took stock of our current strengths and areas for growth and created a vision for campus-wide improvements and enhancements throughout the next five years. Our ultimate goal throughout this process was for the full community to recommit to our longstanding core values and collaborate on a new shared vision for the school's future. The resulting strategic plan, Spark 2023, far exceeds these objectives. In addition to identifying and prioritizing our primary strategic initiatives, Spark 2023 defines nearly 60 specific plans, programs and projects that will help us achieve our vision for the school St. Stephen's will become.

As a community, we have rearticulated and recommitted to our core values and school mission. We have reaffirmed and strengthened the essential core qualities of our community and the student experience, and we have embarked on meaningful initiatives to ensure that we continue live into our mission even more fully in the years to come. Spartans are as dedicated, engaged and as invested as ever, and our school, true to form, provides developmental experiences that, at once, support and challenge students to become the best versions of themselves...from The Hill to the world.

— CHRISTOPHER L. GUNNIN, HEAD OF SCHOOL