

FROM THE

Head of School

Dear Members of the Pingry Community,



The New York Yankees teams that won five World Series rings from 1996-2009 featured a legendary group of players known as the “Core Four” — Derek Jeter, Andy Pettitte, Jorge Posada, and Mariano Rivera. All were drafted as rookies or signed by the Yankees as amateurs, and

two are now enshrined in Cooperstown. They grew up within the organization, and the continuity of their presence set the standard of excellence that helped their teams become a dynasty.

The “Core Four” ideal is a powerful reminder that sometimes what’s great is **not** what’s new. Sometimes what’s great is simply what endures. Pingry continues to thrive and to meet the challenges of the times because of our enduring core values: the importance of community, working for the common good rather than solely for personal advantage, and building relationships. As a former student wrote to me recently, “Pingry’s goals should still remain to attract exceptional students, invest in the finest faculty and staff, and have enriching academic programs.” We agree.

Independent schools often like to follow trends, and chasing “the next big thing” can be a difficult temptation to resist. I’m incredibly proud that our new strategic plan makes the case for taking a different approach. *The Pingry Plan* reflects our belief that to be truly innovative, meeting the moment now means getting back to basics and staying true to what’s core about Pingry: our Mission and Honor Code, our people, and our student-centered education. Resisting fads in favor of time-tested principles and activities is what will lead to the kind of innovation, collaboration, and growth we want our students to experience. *We don’t always need “more” — sometimes what’s core is what’s more.*

We can increasingly find evidence in other places that supports a similar focus on core principles and a return to basics. In his book *Same as Ever: A Guide to What Never Changes*, Morgan Housel writes “change captures our attention because it’s surprising and exciting.” But “things that never change are important because you can put so much confidence into knowing how they’ll shape the future.” Focusing on what’s enduring and on what’s “permanently true” is how we can best position ourselves for future success in an ever-changing world.

In another example of the power of remaining true to a mission, *The Atlantic* now has more subscribers to its print magazine than at any time in its 168-year history. By maintaining its high standards and prioritizing excellence and depth, the magazine has defied trends in the magazine business and just announced its return to being a monthly print publication. Despite its predicted demise thanks to the rise of the internet and the broader downward trends within journalism, the growth and return of *The Atlantic Monthly* suggest that quality is a value that endures.

Former Pingry language teacher and Magistri member Lydia Geacintov once characterized Pingry’s Mission this way: “It respects the past, lives in the present, and prepares students for the future.” The same can also be said of our new strategic plan. Schools like Pingry will always need to manage a careful balance between innovation and stability — something David Brooks describes as “daring explorations from a secure base.” *The Pingry Plan* ensures that our school will continue to serve as that secure base while also becoming the best version of itself, with a vibrant future rooted in core values of community, care, character, and connection.

Sincerely,

Tim Lear