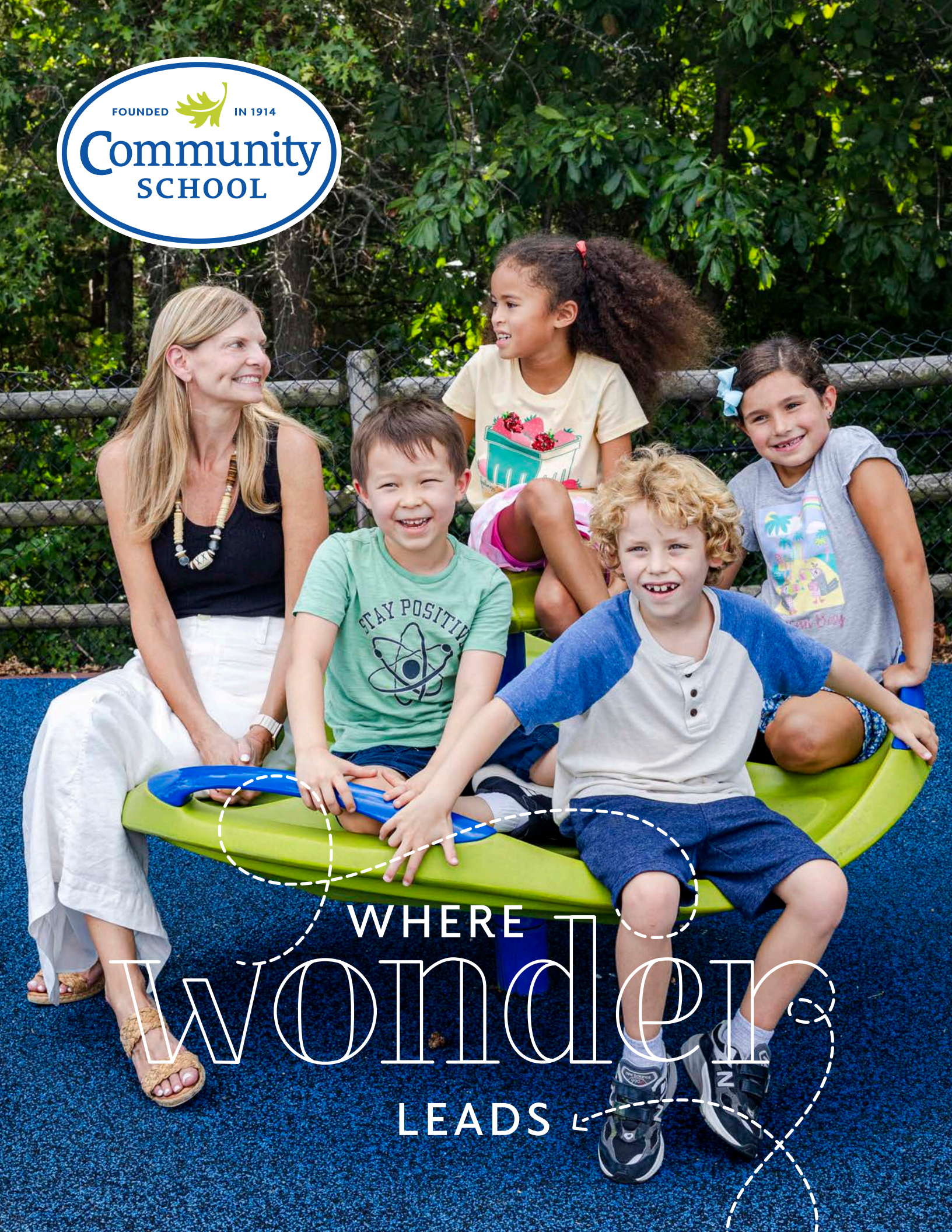
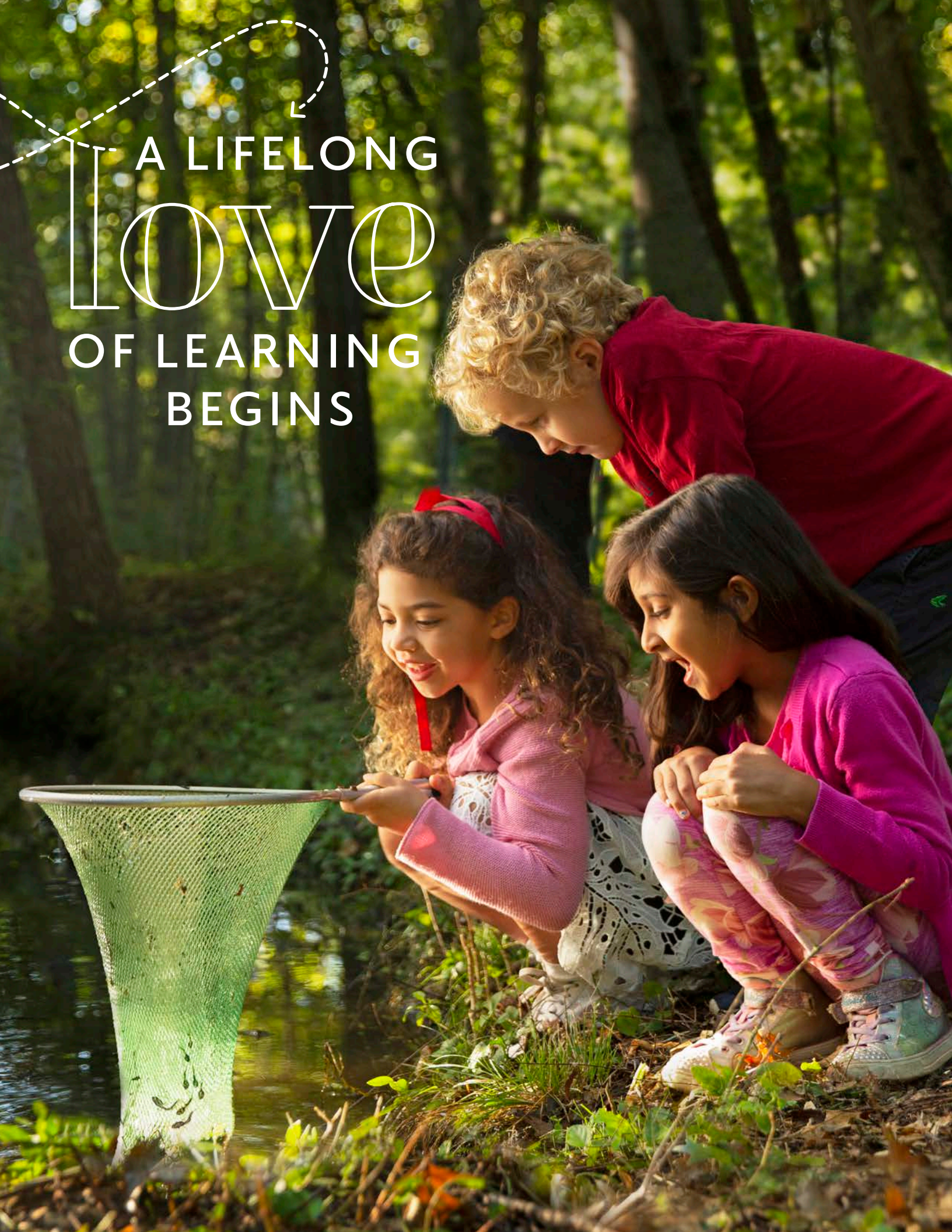

FOUNDED IN 1914
Community
SCHOOL
WHERE
wonder
LEADS


A LIFELONG
love
OF LEARNING
BEGINS

Children learn by exploring. That's true for the physical world and the world of ideas. Community School provides the perfect place for that early exploration in a young child's life.

New people. New places. New ideas.

Welcome to a safe place for young minds to make sense of the world, surrounded by trusted adults who cherish them.

Now, let's go exploring.

Our expansive campus — with its woods, trails, fields, pond, and treehouse classroom — provides a perfect environment for the exploration of a child's world.

The great leaders of tomorrow will be the people who can observe and listen, and then reflect, discuss, and communicate complex ideas in ways that inspire others.

The leadership of the next generation is now just learning to explore our world with fresh eyes and open minds.

Community School understands where that wonder leads.

Overview

Grades

Nursery (age 3) through 6th Grade

School Hours

8:00 a.m. - 3:05 p.m. except Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. Thursday

Half-Day Nursery students
8:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. except Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. Thursday

Enrollment

- 350 students
- 36% students of color
- Students live in 41 different ZIP codes across the metro area.
- Over $1 million allocated each year in student aid.
- More than 70% of Community families are dual-income or single working parents.

Faculty & Administrators

- Student-teacher ratio: 7:1
- Average class size: 20
- At least two lead teachers in each homeroom
- 52 full-time teachers
- 64% have advanced degrees
- Average years teaching experience: 19
- Average years at Community School: 11
- 14% male faculty and 10% faculty of color
- 20 specialists, including a counselor, technology and learning specialists, and subject specialists in science, math, French, visual and performing arts, P.E., and the Discovery Center (library)
- 44% administrators of color

Tuition

2025-2026 tuition includes books, supplies, lunch, snacks, and field trips.

- Half-day Nursery: $17,100
- Nursery – Senior Kindergarten: $25,220
- First - Sixth Grades: $26,210
- Financial aid and tuition refund insurance are offered.

Alumni

2,350 living alumni

Campus

- 18+ semi-secluded wooded acres with:
  - *Pond*
  - *Nature trails*
  - *Playing fields*
  - *Butterfly garden*
  - *Three playgrounds*
  - *Treehouse classroom*
- The Early Childhood Center is for Nursery through Senior Kindergarten; classrooms are spacious and open to outdoor play areas.
- The Main Building contains:
  - *1st - 6th grades*
  - *Community Center*
  - *Discovery Center*
  - *Lower and upper division science labs*
  - *Woodshop*
  - *French rooms*
  - *Gym and movement room*
- A Centennial Arts Center was completed in 2014 with modern rooms for art, music, and drama, as well as a performance space.
- A new Broughton STEAM Center opened in spring 2024 with upgraded classrooms for science, woodshop, and drama.

Resources

- Discovery Center and individual classroom libraries offer a rich selection of books.
- Endowment and Investment Assets: $19,787,710.93 *(as of 6/30/25)*
- Operating Budget: $ 11,087,616
- 100% of families, faculty, administrators, and Board of Trustees participate in Annual Giving.
- Technology is integrated thoughtfully as a tool to support the curriculum. All classrooms feature electronic whiteboards, and older students use iPads and laptops, as appropriate, to enhance learning.

Accreditations

- Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS)
- The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Laurie Smilack

I am so pleased that you have chosen to get to know Community School. It is a special place where children discover their strengths, pursue their passions, and build meaningful connections within a community where they feel safe, valued, and seen. Rooted in our mission of *nurturing the gifts of mind, body and spirit*, we inspire students to lead with curiosity and develop a lifelong love of learning.

Here, education is both broad and balanced. Students explore science, math, reading, writing, social studies, French, the arts, physical education, and technology—guided by expert teachers who encourage creativity, character development, and critical thinking. This whole-child approach ensures that

our alumni not only grow as learners but also as leaders, ready to thrive in secondary school, college, and beyond.

For more than 110 years, Community School has upheld a rich tradition of innovation and care, and we would be honored to partner with your family on your child's journey.

Academics

Community School has long set the standard for excellence among area elementary schools. Combining the perfect balance of intellectual challenge and nurturing support, the school sets the academic bar high for its students, while allowing each child's strengths to shine through.

A research-based curriculum truly engages young students in developmentally appropriate and active learning, and achievement test scores are consistently among the highest in the nation. The 7:1 student-teacher ratio increases opportunities for personalized attention and differentiated instruction. An emphasis on public speaking helps build confident leaders.

High-quality literature, Singapore-based math, creative and expository writing, science, social studies, and foreign language are the heart of the academic program.

Arts & More

A dynamic arts curriculum complements academics through integration with classroom units, creating cross-curricular studies that enhance learning. Students experience music, woodshop, art, and drama with full-time faculty for each discipline.

Physical education and activity are essential to the growth and well-being of children. Students have physical education and daily recess, much of which takes place outdoors on the beautiful campus.

Research-Based Approach

Veteran teachers bring learning to life with proven, research-based methods. In math, a Singapore-based approach guides students from concrete exploration and pictorial representation to abstract problem-solving, supported by the *Math in Focus* curriculum. Community's reading and writing program follows a workshop model that grows with students over time. In the early grades, reading is grounded in the science of reading and strengthened with Fundations, a brain-based method for teaching reading and phonics.

As students progress, they explore a variety of genres, build skills in narrative, persuasive, and informational writing, and move from literal to inferential reading comprehension.

Specialty Subjects & Grade Levels

Art (SK - 6th)*

Band/Chorus (5th - 6th)

Discovery Center (Nursery - 6th)

Drama (JK - 6th)*

French (Nursery - 6th)

Learning Center (SK - 6th)

Music (Nursery - 6th)

P.E. (Nursery - 6th)

Science (JK - 6th)*

Woodshop (SK - 6th)

* *Younger grades also experience art, drama, and science in their classrooms*

Half-Day Nursery Program

Community School offers a half-day Nursery program to provide more options for parents. Community's "half days" are slightly longer than other area programs, allowing for deep exploration into curricular themes and academic readiness skills. Emphasis is on developing problem solving and critical thinking skills.

All nursery students will experience developmentally appropriate French, music, and P.E.

Half-day children will leave after lunch, except Thursdays.

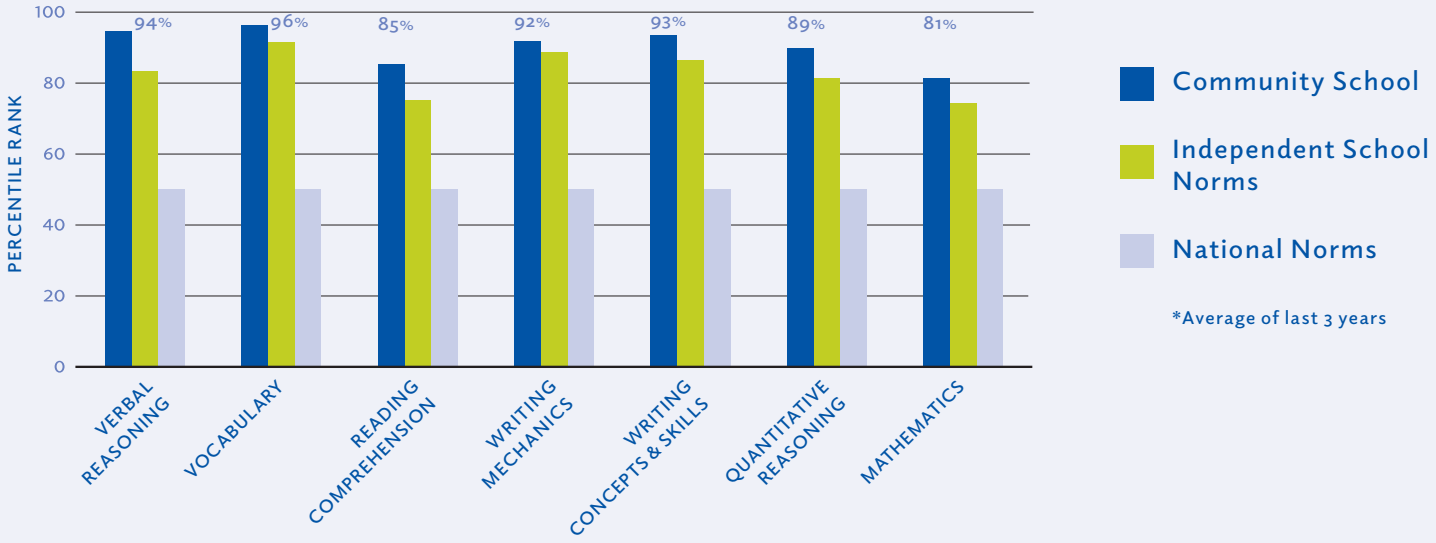
Parents will have the opportunity to "convert" from half-day to full-day as the year progresses.

STEAM

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ARTS, AND MATH

STEAM is nothing new at Community School. For more than 100 years, all students — age 3 through Grade 6 — have explored these themes using in-depth and hands-on approaches.

Comparative Test Scores*



*Average of last 3 years

Achievement Test Scores

Community School students score above both national and independent school averages on the Educational Records Bureau (ERB) test. Over the past three years, Community School's 6th grade students scored 40% above national norms and nearly 8% above other independent schools.

Beyond Community

SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE*

John Burroughs School – 83
MICDS – 44
Villa Duchesne – 15
Whitfield School – 14
Saint Louis Priory School – 12
Public Schools/Other – 11
Westminster Christian Academy – 7
Chaminade College Preparatory – 4
Principia – 4
Visitation Academy – 1
Thomas Jefferson School – 1

*Last 5 years

"...each student is an individual with individual differences and an inherent right to develop those differences."

THE FOUNDING MOTHERS

PARTIAL LIST OF COLLEGES ATTENDED*

Amherst College
Bates College
Baylor University
Boston College
Bowdoin College
Brown University
Bucknell University
Butler University
Colgate University
Cornell University
Dartmouth College
Drexel University
Duke University
Elon University
Fordham University
Georgetown University
Haverford College
Howard University
Indiana University – Bloomington
Kenyon College
Lewis & Clark College
Miami University
Northwestern University
Oklahoma State University
Princeton University
Saint Louis University
Southern Methodist University
Stanford University
Syracuse University
Texas Christian University
The George Washington University
Trinity College
Tufts University
Tulane University
University of Alabama
University of Chicago
University of Colorado – Boulder
University of Florida
University of Kansas
University of Miami
University of Michigan – Ann Arbor
University of Missouri – Kansas City
University of New Hampshire
University of Pennsylvania
University of South Carolina
University of Southern California
University of Tennessee – Knoxville
University of Virginia
Vanderbilt University
Wake Forest University
Washington University
Yale University

*Last 10 years

When the School Day Ends

Over seventy percent of Community families are dual-income or single working parents, making high-quality after school programming a necessity. From the "home away from home" feel of Extended Day to homework help, and the exploration of favorite (and new!) hobbies and interests through Mini Classes, there's something for every child after school.

After School Programs

More than 75% of the student body is involved in Community School's After School Programs. Three options are available: childcare, homework help, and enriching classes.

Extended Day (childcare)
Morning hours: 7:15 a.m. - 7:45 a.m. *(no charge)* - Supervised free time available for all grades in the Community Center. Children frequently play games, draw, read, or chat with friends.

Afternoon hours: After school - 6:00 p.m. *(fees apply)* - This after care program is offered for all grades. Extended Day strives to provide a supportive, home-like environment for children. Outdoor games, creative play, crafts, and quiet time for reading and/or homework are scheduled for the children. A daily snack is provided. Extended Day also meets during faculty professional days and conference days, as well as most school holidays from 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Homework Club, for 4th - 6th graders, assists students in the management and completion of homework and long-term assignments. It is an opportunity for students to practice and master time management and organizational skills. Students meet with experienced homework advisors to discuss assignments, organize materials, and establish long- and short-term goals. A nutritious snack and outdoor play are offered each day. Homework Club meets Monday through Thursday; two days minimum enrollment is required.

Mini Classes provide a variety of after school experiences, with a wide range of offerings such as tennis, pickleball, art, chess, LEGO building, and dance. Topics offer JK - 6th grade children an opportunity to explore exciting academic and non-academic areas. Classes are often taught by Community teachers, although community organizations such as STAGES and Mad Science of St. Louis also regularly provide classes.

Athletics

Community students can frequently be found playing soccer, tee ball, basketball, and other sports in local community leagues, usually coached by parent volunteers. Starting in third grade, they can also join school-sponsored teams—currently cross country and basketball—organized and coached by Community teachers and parents.

Summer Program

Community Summer Camps provide a wide variety of summertime experiences for ages 3 - 14, from academics to arts to just plain summer fun. Hundreds of campers choose from a wide variety of mini camps, Play Camp (for our youngest campers), and FUNdamentals, geared toward getting students ready for the upcoming school year. All camps are staffed with experienced teachers and take place on Community's beautiful 18-acre campus.

The "Community of Community"

A growing body of research confirms the advantages of building a sense of community in school. Students directly benefit from this experience and are more likely to be academically motivated, to act ethically and altruistically, to develop social and emotional competencies, and to avoid problem behaviors.

Our students are responsible, caring, and vibrant children who learn how to work with and lead others in an environment that appreciates diversity and promotes inclusion. Our programs and culture are intentionally designed to promote attributes such as respect, cooperation, responsibility, assertiveness, empathy, and self-control.

Service Learning

Community School's Service Learning program focuses on good citizenship and an awareness of the community at large. The emphasis is on giving time and energy rather than monetary donations. As students assist others, they also build leadership skills. They learn about strengths and needs in the local community, collaborate with peers to come up with possible solutions, and gain an understanding of how another person's experience might be different than their own.

Each grade level participates in a service project. Recent examples include nursery students making animal treats and blankets for a local animal shelter and fifth graders collecting books to donate to local nonprofit organizations. Additionally, all Community families are invited to volunteer at our MLK Day of Service, an annual event that honors the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Responsive Classroom

Classroom management is aided by the *Responsive Classroom* program, providing an evidence-based social and emotional approach to teaching that focuses on the strong link between academic success and social-emotional learning. Through this program, our teachers create safe and joyful learning communities where students develop strong social and academic skills and every student can thrive. Having a strong social-emotional curriculum equips children to take on challenging academics with greater confidence.

Family Groups & Buddies

Two programs promote student interaction and inclusivity across grade levels. The Family Groups program, beginning in first grade, builds groups comprised of a child from each grade with a teacher. Groups remain stable from year to year, so wonderful friendships are built as older students mentor younger ones. Our buddy program provides another meaningful way for older and younger students to interact beginning in JK. Starting in third grade, students become the "big buddy" and serve as role models for their younger buddies.

Family Involvement

Community School parents are highly engaged with their children's education, whether driving on field trips, reading to a class, or serving on the Board of Trustees or on a Community Parent Association (CPA) committee. Community encourages all parents to become involved in the life of the school.

COMMITTEES

- Book Covering & Discovery Center
- Book Show
- Bulletin Boards
- Community Cares
- Faculty & Staff Appreciation
- Fundraising Events
- Goldy Day
- Grandparents & Special Friends Day
- Parent Diversity Group
- Parenting in a Digital Age
- School Store
- School Tours & New Parent Hospitality
- Stan & Clayton Rice Night
- Veterans Day
- Yearbook

"The differentiated learning approach at Community School allowed each of my children to thrive academically and socially while becoming kind and caring young adults. The school embraces the whole family, and we will forever treasure the time we spent at Community School."

COMMUNITY SCHOOL
PARENT OF GRADUATE

On Community's campus, teachers, staff, parents, and students all come together with the common goal of an exceptional educational experience.

That experience empowers the students now and inspires them well into the future to be their very best selves—academically, socially, and emotionally.

At Community School, we believe in diversity, inclusion, and the equitable treatment of all people.

Diversity Statement

Community School welcomes all families.

We are committed to diversity and inclusion in every aspect of our school by embracing the differences as well as the similarities of our students. Community School's goal is that students, families, faculty, and staff feel welcomed, valued, and respected. Community School's philosophy is based on the belief that diversity and inclusivity enrich the mind, body and spirit. Indeed, in our Founding Principles—written over 100 years ago—Community School pledges "to recognize the child as an individual with individual differences" and "to cultivate in each child a spirit of courtesy, an appreciation for individual differences, and respect for the opinion of others."

As an early childhood and elementary school, Community School understands its critical role as one of a student's first experiences with the world. We encourage students to experience and share in the diverse backgrounds that exist within our school. Community School is committed to the recruitment and retention of excellent teachers with varied backgrounds that enrich the student and family experience. Through our rich curriculum and school programs, we introduce our community to a variety of cultures and experiences. In addition, we invite all students and families to share their heritage and traditions in our classrooms. Our character education urges students to create purposeful relationships within and beyond the classroom.

Community School seeks to prepare compassionate leaders for our multicultural nation and world. We offer an education that respects and values the perspectives of others and seeks to ensure all families and students feel that they belong.

Investing in the Future

"A great school allows each child to become the best version of themselves. This idea is at the heart of Community School. My children head out the door excited for school every single day. It's their happy place."

COMMUNITY SCHOOL PARENT

All-Inclusive Tuition

Unlike some schools, Community's tuition covers just about everything. All your child needs to start the school year is a backpack.

INCLUDED IN TUITION

Hot lunches	Books
Snacks	School supplies
Field trips	Yearbook

In the interest of no surprises, there may be a few incidentals throughout the year such as an optional contribution toward a teacher gift. Additional, but reasonable, fees are charged for after school and summer programming. We also ask each family to make a tax-deductible gift to our Annual Fund to help support our incredible academic programs and bridge the gap between tuition and the true cost of educating a child.

Financial Aid

Community School is committed to assisting families who are not able to pay the full tuition.

The financial aid program at Community School helps make it possible for students who would not otherwise be able to attend Community to access support.

Financial aid dollars come from private donations, endowment income, and named scholarship funds.

Over $1 million is allocated each year in student aid, with awards ranging in amount based on demonstrated need and the availability of funds.

A careful analysis of a family's complete financial information, including all sources of funds available to contribute to the child's education, is conducted by the Financial Aid Committee.

Admissions decisions are made independently from requests for aid.

The Founding Mothers

A measure of Community School's success can be seen on the faces of those who matter most, the children, but the story began in 1914 with a group of intelligent, idealistic women. They have gone down in the school's history as "the Founding Mothers." The Founding Mothers had a dream of a more educationally progressive school than what existed at that time in St. Louis. They felt that the "rigid, formal approach" to education could and should be changed into an exciting adventure where wonder leads. They wrote the ten Guiding Principles that Community School has embodied for over 100 years.

The Ten Guiding Principles

1. The school should recognize the child as an individual with individual differences, and an inherent right to develop these differences.
2. The school should set up the schedule with freedom to develop these differences. There should be freedom, but freedom with control.
3. The school should see to it that children are trained to become independent thinkers, to express themselves freely and accurately, free of embarrassment or self-consciousness, and to assume responsibility and carry it through to a successful end.
4. The school should provide a classroom atmosphere of child-teacher cooperation, as opposed to the teacher-dominated classroom. The teacher should be a source of informed assistance to whom children can go for direction in their search for desired material.
5. The school should have teachers sufficiently rich in background to enable them to provide classroom material that will spark a child's imagination, keep it alive, and encourage each child to want to know more.
6. The school should make children aware of their immediate world, their place in that environment, and their responsibility in global issues.
7. The school should cultivate in each child a spirit of courtesy, an appreciation for individual differences, and respect for the opinion of others.
8. The school should open a child's eyes to the wonders of nature, the stars, the universe and the world around them.
9. The student must be led to appreciate the beauty in literature and the fine arts and should be encouraged to create any or all of them.
10. The child should be made to understand that the so-called tool subjects (reading, writing, and arithmetic) are means of securing the goals toward which one strives and to this end each child must become proficient.

FOUNDED IN 1914
Community SCHOOL

Admission Events

OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, November 8, 9:00 a.m.

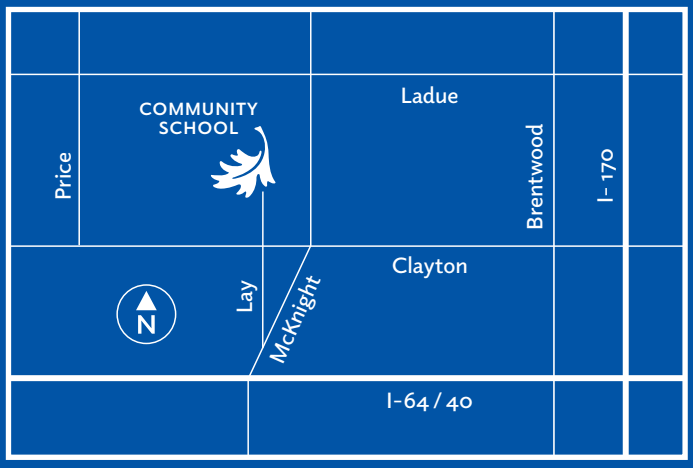
CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY
Tuesday, November 18, 9:15 a.m.
Wednesday, January 14, 9:15 a.m.
Tuesday, January 27, 9:15 a.m.

WHERE WONDER BEGINS: MINI CLASSES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS
Saturday, December 6, 9:00 a.m.

ADMISSIONS PLAYDATE (FOR APPLICANTS)
Friday, January 16, 8:00 a.m.

Location

Community is conveniently located just off Clayton Road, one mile west of Brentwood Boulevard. Easily accessible from I-64 or I-170, the school is tucked away at the north end of Lay Road.



More Information

Contact the Director of Admission for a personal tour or more information:

Dana Scott Saulsberry
(314) 991-0005 x315
admissions@communityschool.com

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