



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.





Welcome to
Community School

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
- 39% students of color
- Students live in 40 different ZIP codes across the metro area.
- Over \$1 million allocated each year in student aid.
- More than 75% 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
- 53 full-time teachers
- 68% have advanced degrees
- Average years teaching experience: 21
- Average years at Community School: 12
- 15% male faculty and 11% 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)
- 38% administrators of color

Tuition

2026-2027 tuition includes books, supplies, lunch, snacks, and field trips.

- Half-day Nursery: \$17,870*
- Nursery – Senior Kindergarten: \$26,355
- First – Sixth Grades: \$27,390
- Financial aid and tuition refund insurance are offered.

**Priority is given to full-day nursery applicants. Half-day students are considered based on available space.*

Alumni

2,390 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 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: \$22,652,717 (as of 6/30/26)
- Operating Budget: \$11,734,015
- 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



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.

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.

Research-Based Approach

A research-based curriculum truly engages young students in developmentally appropriate and active learning. Veteran teachers bring learning to life with proven methods, while 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, writing, science, social studies, and foreign language are at the heart of Community's academic program. In math, students move from concrete exploration and pictorial representation to abstract problem-solving. Reading and writing follow a workshop model that grows with students over time. Early literacy is grounded in the science of reading and strengthened by Foundations, a structured approach to phonics and foundational skills. As students progress, they engage with increasingly complex literature, deepen their comprehension from literal to inferential, and develop their voices across narrative, persuasive, and informational writing.

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.

Specialty Subjects & Grade Levels

Art (JK - 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)

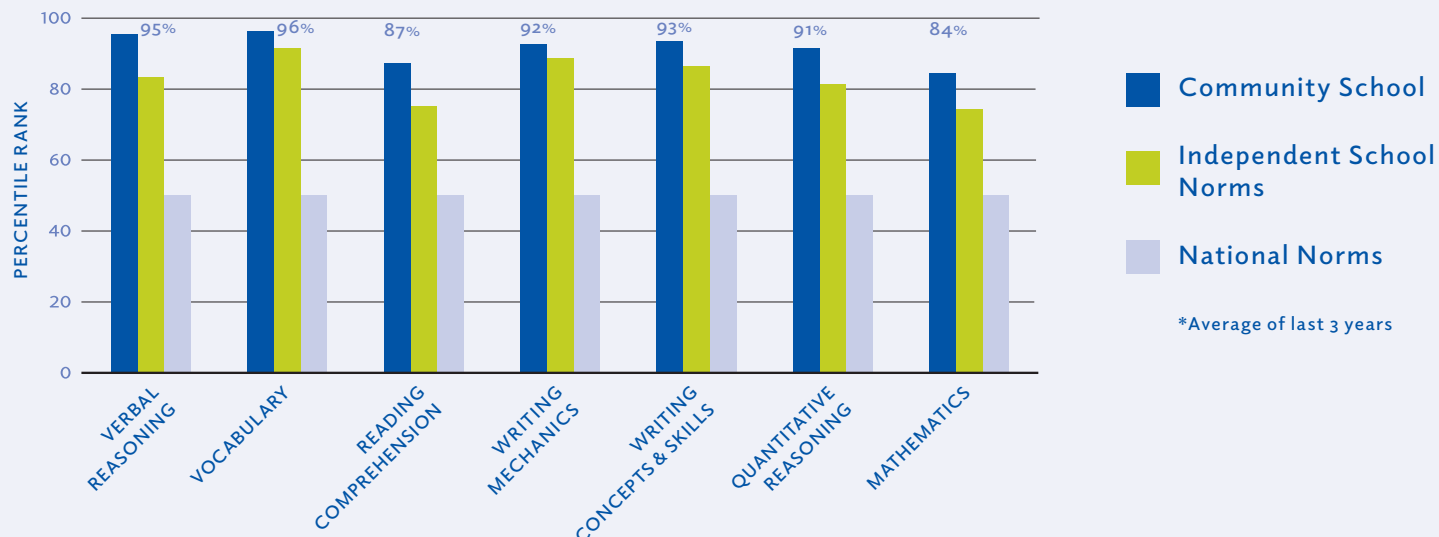
**Younger grades also experience art, drama, and science in their classrooms*

Outdoor Learning

At Community School, the outdoors is an extension of the classroom. Our 18-acre campus gives children daily opportunities to explore, observe, inquire, and discover in the woods, on trails, in gardens, at the pond, and in our treehouse classroom. These experiences make learning active and meaningful while nurturing curiosity, creativity, and connection.

Outdoor learning also helps children build stronger bodies, calmer minds, and a deeper appreciation for nature and each other. Through hands-on exploration and sustainability-minded experiences, students develop an understanding of and care for the environment around them.

Comparative Test Scores*



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	Saint Louis Priory School – 11	Chaminade College Preparatory – 2
MICDS – 50	Westminster Christian Academy – 5	Thomas Jefferson School – 1
Public Schools/Other – 14	Principia – 4	
Villa Duchesne – 12		
Whitfield School – 12		

*Last 5 years

PARTIAL LIST OF COLLEGES ATTENDED*

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

*Last 10 years



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

THE FOUNDING MOTHERS

When the School Day Ends



Over seventy-five 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 enrichment 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 basketball and cross country—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 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

The “Community of Community”

At Community School, we believe children grow through being part of a community and learning that they have something meaningful to contribute to it.

Our “Community of Community” begins with a strong partnership between school and families and extends to the relationships children build with teachers, classmates, students of different ages, and the wider community. We value the different identities, cultures, experiences, and perspectives each person brings, creating a community where children feel known, valued, and connected. This sense of belonging gives children the confidence to take risks and engage deeply in their learning. Over time, they come to know themselves more fully while recognizing their responsibility to others and their place in the larger community.

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 guided by the *Responsive Classroom* program, an evidence-based social and emotional approach to teaching. Our teachers create safe and joyful learning communities where students develop strong social and academic skills and every child can thrive. Each day begins with a Morning Meeting, where students build relationships and prepare for learning,

and ends with a Closing Meeting, where they reflect on the day and reconnect as a community. Throughout the day, consistent routines and expectations help children develop independence, responsibility, and the skills to navigate challenges with 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	Parent Diversity Group
Book Show	School Store
Bulletin Boards	School Tours & New Parent Hospitality
Community Cares	Stan & Clayton Rice Night
Faculty & Staff Appreciation	Veterans Day
Fundraising Events	Yearbook
Goldy Day	
GrandFriends Day	

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, equity, and inclusion in every aspect of school life, striving to be a community where relationships, varied perspectives, and a deep sense of belonging allow every individual to feel welcomed, valued, and connected.

Our commitment is rooted in our mission of nurturing the gifts of mind, body and spirit. In our Founding Principles, written over 100 years ago, Community School pledged “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.” We honor that foundation while recognizing that this work is ongoing and requires us to continue learning, reflecting, and growing together.

Community School prepares students not only for academic success, but for lives of empathy, curiosity, and leadership in a diverse and interconnected world. This work is strengthened through partnership. Each of us, including students, families, faculty, and staff, shares responsibility for building and sustaining a community that fosters understanding, respect, and growth, one from which we all benefit.

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 for Community School, many of which continue to shape our practices today.

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.



Admission Events

OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, November 7, 9:00 a.m.

CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY

Tuesday, November 17, 9:15 a.m.

Wednesday, January 13, 9:15 a.m.

Tuesday, January 26, 9:15 a.m.

WHERE WONDER BEGINS: MINI CLASSES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

Saturday, December 12, 9:00 a.m.

ADMISSIONS PLAYDATE (FOR APPLICANTS)

Friday, January 15, 8:00 a.m.

More Information

Contact our Director of Enrollment
& Culture for a personal tour or more
information:

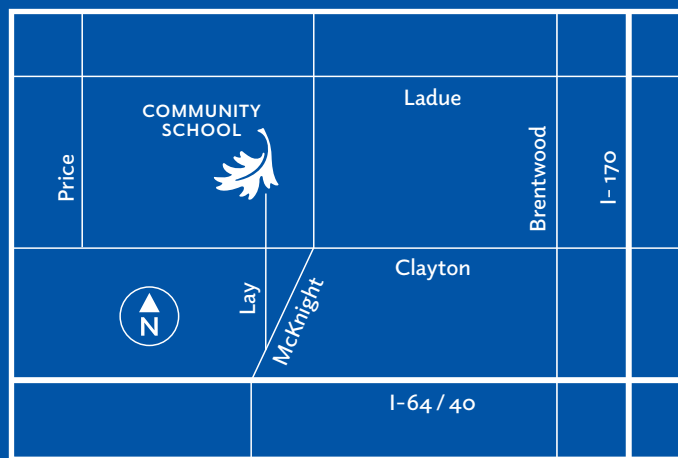
Shernina Nichols

(314) 991-0005 x315

admissions@communityschool.com

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.



900 Lay Road, St. Louis, MO 63124
(314) 991-0005 || (314) 991-1512 fax
CommunitySchool.com