

# COLLABORATION

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The background of the entire page features a large, stylized flame graphic. The flame is composed of several overlapping, teardrop-shaped segments. The central segment is a bright orange-yellow, while the outer segments are a vibrant red-pink. The background is a dark blue with a subtle, repeating pattern of small, light blue circles. The flame graphic is positioned on the right side of the page, with its base extending towards the bottom left.

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## Collaboration

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*Alone we can do so little;  
together we can do so much.*  
Helen Keller

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# INTRODUCTION

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## **collaboration**, /kəˌlæbəˈreɪʃ(ə)n/, *noun*

1. the state of having shared interests or efforts (as in social or business matters) *<a documentary film on the battle that was produced in collaboration with a society of historical reenactors>*
2. the work and activity of a number of persons who individually contribute toward the efficiency of the whole *<our collaboration produced a better result than any of us could have achieved alone>*  
(Merriam-Webster)

Over the last five years, a number of themes have emerged in independent schools. Non-cognitive skills, leadership skills, and global competency have been emphasized as we seek to equip students for an unknown future. Project-based learning, maker learning, flipped instruction, and brain-based learning have continued to gain greater attention and wider use in the classroom. The impact and debates over technology continue, begging some questions, but overall connecting us and making the impossible, possible. Information has never been so accessible, and still each breakthrough brings new philosophical questions about privacy, use, safety, balance, and the lasting impact on our lives.

Amidst this whirlwind another theme has emerged – a greater interest in collaboration. Collaboration is a popular topic among educators. In the classroom, collaboration is one of the four key learning and innovation competences identified as 21st century skills. In schools, teachers are encouraged to collaborate by moving outside their classrooms to share best

practices and tackle problems. More teachers are also teaching collaboratively so they can connect subjects and illustrate relevancy. Departments are encouraged to collaborate so they can identify areas for improvement. Facilities are being designed and renovated in order to create spaces for organic and planned collaboration.

Schools benefit from collaboration. Collaboration with a diverse group of outside parties fosters innovation and creativity. Schools gain fresh insight into how to structure programs or share resources. Schools that collaborate on service projects also demonstrate their desire to be part of real-world solutions. They develop relationships in their community that translate into a deep pool of resources for future projects.

This booklet highlights some of the many collaborations taking place in and among SAIS schools. Strategic collaborations will be a game changer for schools in the coming years. Understanding what your school has to offer, and seeking like-minded organizations, schools, or businesses as partners, can help your school expand its reach and impact. What existing and new collaborations might benefit your school and your community?

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*None of us is as smart as all of us.*  
Ken Blanchard

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## Modeling Collaboration: Cristo Rey Atlanta

by: Sarah Stewart, SAIS

Published: October, 2014



Timothy Hipp, Chair of the Upper School Computer Science Department at Woodward Academy, first heard of Cristo Rey while working at St. Ignatius College Prep in Chicago in 1997. Cristo Rey had launched

the previous year, and St. Ignatius offered to give them some computer equipment. Cristo Rey Schools are run by the Society of Jesus, whose members are called Jesuits. The schools serve children from low-income families, offering a college preparatory education and new future to those willing to do the work.

The concept resonated with Hipp. While an undergraduate at The University of Notre Dame, Hipp developed a love for social service projects, and in fact attributed his decision to go into teaching to a leadership role he fulfilled with the Appalachia Seminar, an experiential learning offering of the Center for Social Concerns. Hipp's marriage and career eventually brought him to Atlanta. He was working at Woodward and his wife was a teacher at Marist School. Still service-minded, he participated in REACH for Excellence, a free leadership and enrichment program for middle school students from low-income families. In 2007, Hipp completed his Ed.M. at the Klingenstein Center for Independent School Leadership at Columbia University's Teacher College. His thesis paper explored service-learning projects at Woodward Academy and The Westminster Schools.

In 2010, Hipp participated in Leadership Woodward, a two-year program the school offers to a select group of aspiring leaders, started by its President Stuart Gulley. At the conclusion of the program, participants must undertake a group project that challenges their comfort zone in terms of leadership, and introduces them to

environments as diverse as Woodward. Hipp had big dreams: he wanted to bring Cristo Rey to Atlanta.

The first Cristo Rey Jesuit High School opened in Chicago in 1996. The Jesuit Provincial wanted to create a quality, Catholic, college preparatory high school in the Pilsen community to serve its largely Hispanic, working-class families. Father John P. Foley had spent 34 years working in education in Tacna, Peru before he was called back to Chicago to oversee the project. His team devised a daring plan, a private school where students would work one day a week at nearby businesses to help pay for their tuition. The arrangement provided students with valuable work experience, the school with the funding it needed, and the businesses a way to help their community.

As word spread, educators around the country in Portland, OR, Denver, CO, and Los Angeles, CA, wanted to replicate the Cristo Rey model to serve their inner city students. In 2001, Foley established the Cristo Rey Network of schools. In 2003, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, along with philanthropists B.J. and Bebe Cassin of the Cassin Educational Initiative Foundation, granted \$18.9 million to Cristo Rey to promote the replication of its schools.

Hipp had been in contact with the Cristo Rey network since 2008 and understood the requirements — a feasibility study to prove the school's viability and organizing leaders to spearhead the project. The work would also require Hipp to cut his teaching duties to part-time.



Unsure of their reactions, Hipp presented the idea to Gulley and Woodward's former Vice President of Finance and Administration Barb Egan. The two thought it was an incredible opportunity and offered their total support.

Hipp's project was well-timed. Atlanta had largely recovered from the recession with businesses and real estate prices rebounding.



Bob Fitzgerald, a former board member of Marist, had recently retired as Executive Director of Atlanta's Ignatius House Retreat, and was looking for his next mission. He enthusiastically came on board as chair of the school's Board of Trustees. Also, the city's Archbishop Wilton Gregory had previously expressed an interest in bringing Cristo Rey to Atlanta. Gregory is a Chicago native, and had served the church there. Gregory agreed to act as honorary chair in a fundraising campaign for Cristo Rey Atlanta. He also donated \$1.5 million and the use of the former archdiocesan administration office building downtown. The office is about 39,000 square feet and once renovated, could house 16 classrooms.

Still there was much work to be done. The school needed faculty, prospective students, furniture, equipment, financial resources, administrative support, and corporations who would partner with it on its work-study program. Hipp recruited fellow educators from Woodward, Notre Dame Academy, Blessed Trinity Catholic High School, and Holy Spirit Preparatory School, plus other business leaders, to help with the feasibility study.

The model of Cristo Rey speaks directly to what those in the independent school world call the public purpose of private education. The topic was highlighted in an essay in *Independent School* magazine in 2000 by former head Albert Adams of Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco. He wrote:

"Independent schools are uniquely positioned to make a difference in the public domain. Given the societal turf independent schools occupy, the considerable resources they command, and the powerful network of caring and influential people they attract, independent schools have the opportunity – and, I believe, the obligation – to do more than educate 1.5 percent of our nation's children exceptionally well."

As news of Cristo Rey's move to Atlanta spread, local independent schools saw an opportunity to join in a remarkable effort. The Rev. Joel Konszen, S.M., principal of Marist, quickly became

involved with the effort, offering to serve on the school's board. Konzen had served as a mentor to Hipp ever since he approached him about starting a Cristo Rey school after his summer of service



with the REACH for Excellence program. Konzen identified resources Marist could contrib-

ute and recruited students to volunteer. Marist's Chief Financial Officer Susan Hansen also volunteered her time and expertise. Hansen had worked with a Cristo Rey School while working in Indianapolis, and understood its potential impact on the Atlanta community. She joined the committee in charge of the feasibility study and ultimately helped to build Cristo Rey's budget, outlining how many kids they would need to break even. Hansen also agreed to offer ongoing administrative support and serve as Cristo Rey Atlanta's temporary CFO.

"This kind of program is a game changer," Hansen said. "It was in Chicago, in Indianapolis, and it will be in Atlanta. These are kids that would be in gangs or not able to get a good education and it's just an awesome thing. All of the Cristo Rey schools are great examples of the impact we can have on our community."

Marist committed more than 600 lockers, furniture, smart boards, lab equipment, books, and the use of its human resources software, which Hansen oversaw. It offered to have Cristo Rey students fulfill their work-study at the school, and some of its staff, including Hansen, volunteered to serve as mentors for Cristo Rey students.

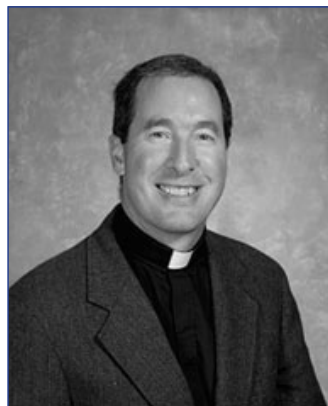
Other independent schools quickly joined the effort. Woodward donated a classroom set of notebook computers, and Vice President of Finance Kelly Sanderson, a Leadership Woodward classmate of Hipp, was so impressed with the concept that she helped Woodward pledge two 14-passenger buses and two 56-passenger buses to support the school's work-study program. Woodward also provided parts for the buses and one year's worth of mechanical support. Fred Assaf, Head of Pace Academy, heard about

Cristo Rey Atlanta through his church, the Cathedral of Christ the King. Pace was in the midst of a massive construction project, demolishing its original 1961 Upper School to make way for a new 75,000-square-foot Upper School that doubled its space. Assaf offered Cristo Rey all the furniture — desks, chairs, lockers, equipment — from their previous school.

Also, The Howard School in Atlanta offered use of their athletic fields and gymnasium for Cristo Rey's athletics programs.

Area churches and businesses also stepped up efforts to assist. Twenty-six metro Atlanta parishes have offered support, with specific churches offering volunteers, books, and sack lunches. The children's clothing company Carter's Inc., which was vacating its downtown offices, gave the school all their office furniture. Ridgeview Institute gave the school 42 computers, and Meru Networks, based in Sunnyvale, CA, provided the school with free wireless and network support.

Forty-one of Atlanta's top corporations came on board, each taking on four students from the school to participate in a work-study program. They included UPS Capital, The Coca-Cola Company, Delta Air Lines, Invesco, Georgia Institute of Technology, Emory Healthcare, SunTrust Banks, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Bank of America, Southern Company, and more. Together the businesses supported 42 percent of the school's budget, around \$1.2 million.



Leadership for such a venture was also critical. Fitzgerald and other leaders on the school's board began looking for a president and principal for Cristo Rey Atlanta. With the help of the provinces of New England, New York, and Maryland, they were sent Jesuit Father Jim Van Dyke. Van Dyke was on track to head a Jesuit school in New York and had more



than 25 years experience in education, as well as governance, coaching, retreat work and more. For the position of president, the school needed someone with ample connections, a deep commitment to the Cristo Rey mission, and stellar fund-raising skills. They identified Deacon Bill Garrett. Garrett served at All Saints Church in Dunwoody, and was the former president of the Mercy Care Foundation, a medical outreach program to the homeless and others without insurance. Garrett and Van Dyke spent much of 2013 visiting parishes and businesses all over Atlanta. At wealthy parishes they would ask for support, while at parishes in low-income areas they would recruit students.



On August 4, 2014, the collaborative work of independent schools, businesses, churches, government, and non-profits culminated in the opening of Cristo Rey Atlanta. At 7:30 a.m. in the heart of downtown Atlanta on West Peachtree Street, 160 freshman students from as far south as Peachtree City and north to Lawrenceville, filed into its two-story building to begin their four-year journey toward a better life. The



school is the 28th in the Cristo Rey Network, and its leaders plan to grow its student body to around 500 in the next five years, or as physical space will allow.

Looking back at the sequence of events that allowed Cristo Rey to come to Atlanta, those who participated offer a number of reflections. Hipp believes it is important to follow one's passions and be willing to pursue big dreams. He also says you have to do the work, and put in the hours required to make things happen. In mobilizing talent and gaining support, Garrett says it is important to identify points of self-interest, and to learn how to present the value of a program. The need for a college preparatory school for low-income students in Atlanta was not difficult to sell. However, the pitch to corporations was more complex. These businesses were taking a risk allowing unskilled high school students into their offices. Garrett made the argument that with Cristo Rey, they would not just be writing a check, they would be enriching students' lives, and able to see the results of their charity first-hand.

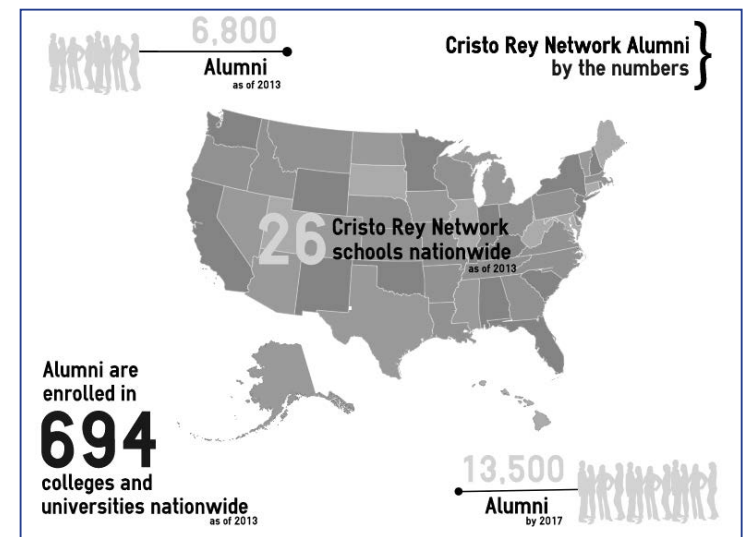
Van Dyke adds that the work-study element of Cristo Rey makes school highly relevant to its students and is something all schools should consider. "So often school takes place in a vacuum and apart from the skills and requirements of the workplace," said Van Dyke. "Singularity, education is not simply something that takes place in the classroom and something that feeds the mind. I like to think that we are feeding the ambitions of our students and giving them tools to make that a reality."



Cristo Rey's students are the best proof of its impact. According to the National Student Clearinghouse, (NSC) for the graduating classes of 2008-2012, 90 percent were enrolled in college. Also for the graduating classes of 2005-2007, 42 percent have graduated college. The numbers are double the amount of graduates, as

compared to students from their local public school. President Bill Garrett summed up the school's mission and incredible support in an article in *The Georgia Bulletin*:

For the past 200-plus years, Catholic education, particularly for immigrants, low-income families and the marginalized of our communities, has been a point of great accomplishment for people of our Church in this great nation . . . Cristo Rey uses a successful, proven educational and financial model that allows the Catholic Church to continue the ministry to our Atlanta community. We take the journey not alone but with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the active engagement and participation of so very many. We are Cristo Rey Atlanta Jesuit High School, the school that works in the heart of Atlanta.



*The Cristo Rey Network includes 28 schools, in 18 states, and 27 cities across the country. The schools teach more than 9,000 students, 96 percent of which are students of color. The average family income of a Cristo Rey student is \$34,000 a year. The school also relies heavily on its roughly 1,800 corporate partners who participate in Cristo Rey's work-study program, which in turn pays more than half of each student's tuition.*

## Augusta Forward

by: Sarah Stewart, SAIS

Published: October, 2014

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Episcopal Day School's vision for a new campus arose during a strategic planning session in 2005. Head of School Ned Murray was working with the school's board of trustees and they agreed that the school needed more athletic space. The current play area outside the 70-year-old historic building was limited and too small. The school had no room to accommodate the changing needs of its current students, much less to grow.



Like many independent schools, EDS was also in the process of reimagining parts of its curriculum to place a greater focus on STEM curriculum and programs that foster non-cognitive skills such as creativity and problem solving. EDS wanted to add more innovative and experiential opportunities for its students. Murray and the board wondered how a second campus might meet these needs, so they formed a committee to search for the land.

Located in the historic district of Summerville in Augusta, GA, EDS has a rich history. The school was founded in 1944 by the Church of the Good Shepherd as a Christian kindergarten and childcare resource for local mothers working in the war effort. EDS was one of the first schools in the area to integrate in 1952, a decade before court-ordered desegregation. The school operates under principles of the Episcopal faith such as a commitment to creating an open and nurturing academic environment, striving for community responsibility, living a Christ-centered life that respects others, and a commitment to racial, religious, and socio-economic diversity. Today EDS teaches around 400 students, grades Pre-K through 8.

Murray has served as Head of EDS since 2003. He sits on the board of trustees for SAIS, is a founding member of the Elementary Schools Research Collaborative (a national consortium of more than 30 large K-8 schools); and serves on a task force working with Educational Testing Service to design the first-ever assessment of middle school students for non-cognitive skills. Before EDS, Murray taught in public education, and at St. Andrew's-Sewanee School and Baylor School. He holds a M.Ed. from the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga, and recently completed his D.Min. in Educational Leadership at Virginia Theological Seminary.

In late 2012, after researching dozens of properties, EDS paid \$1.15 million for a 28.4-acre track of land, located 7 miles from its campus off Flowing Wells Road. A former horse farm, the land is largely flat and spacious with some wetlands and creeks. EDS does not have a timeline on the property's development, but anticipates it will cost around \$15 million. The campus will house expanded athletics with fitness stations, running trails and a gym; outdoor lab space, classrooms, and gardens for STEM-related projects; and spaces that would contribute to EDS's leadership programs such as a ropes course and climbing area.

EDS also wants the space to be used as a community resource and has been pursuing partnerships with a range of other organizations in Augusta. The school has had more than a dozen focus groups on how they might use the space with parents and community leaders, plus leaders from Georgia Regents University, Augusta Technical College, Phinizy Center for Water Sciences, Family Y of Greater Augusta, Augusta Red Cross and more.



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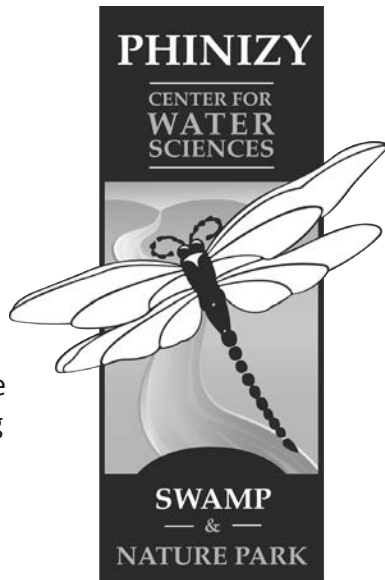
EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL

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*Foundations for Life*



EDS has a long and close relationship with the Phinizy Center and its Senior Environmental Educator, Ruth Mead. The center is located in the 1,100-acre Phinizy Swamp Nature Park in the Savannah River Basin. It promotes sustainable watersheds and economic vitality through research, education, and public involvement. Mead has been collaborating with EDS teachers for years on field trips for students. In 2013, two EDS teachers completed a Master Naturalist Program offered at the center under Mead's instruction. Ingrid McNeil is EDS's 6th grade math teacher and middle school science teacher, while Mary Ann Marriott is its 7th grade teacher and department coordinator. As part of the program, Marriott and McNeil took a kayak tour of the Savannah River and Augusta Canal, learning about its history and conducting experiments. The activity inspired them to design a new activity for their students; a cross-curricular study where the students would take a day-long kayak trip. While paddling the Savannah River, 6th and 7th grade students would hear about its history and economic impact. They would cover topics such as water quality, micro invertebrates, and the biodiversity of the river. They would test for bacteria such as *E. coli* (*Escherichia coli*) and calculate flow rates. Students would also write journals about the experience or study related poetry.



Marriott and McNeil say the experience is the type of cross-curricular, issue-based, project-based learning that they hope to grow at EDS, and the new property, with its land, wetlands, and creeks will provide ample opportunities. In addition, EDS is working with ATOMS (American Teachers of Math and Science) Placement Services on developing a STEM Strategic Plan. After a visit to the campus last spring, ATOMS provided the school with a 72-page

report, reviewing and recommending ways for EDS to improve its STEM programs.

EDS is also partnering with different community organizations on developing leadership programs that will take place at the campus. EDS has partnered with the Augusta Red Cross Youth Board since 2009. Lynn Reese is the Director of Community Education and Volunteer Resources for the Red Cross and has overseen its youth board for 25 years. She says there are few leadership resources for students in Augusta, a need her organization has strived to meet. The youth board is comprised of 70 diverse high school students from 21 local schools who identify and lead service projects. The group runs a leadership middle school conference every year, and in 2009 they found themselves without a space to work. Murray reached out and offered EDS's main campus, as well as their technology and team building supplies to support the conference. In the last five years, the program has grown from serving 70 children to serving more than 600. The children learn skills like public speaking, dealing with bullies, problem solving, and other life skills. With the new campus the two plan to incorporate a ropes course and other activities into the program. "Ned is a true visionary," Reese said. "He's a mentor to our high school youth board and an asset to our program. We so appreciate his willingness to partner with the Red Cross and help the youth. They adore him."

While it was natural for EDS to include many of its current partners in developing the new campus, collaborating with leaders in higher education was more unique. Murray regularly speaks to groups such as the Rotary Club of Augusta, Augusta South Rotary Club, Leadership Augusta, and Leadership Columbia County, about trends in K-12 education. Last January, he was invited to speak at the TEDxTelfairStreet, the first TEDx event in Augusta. Murray discussed the many disruptions occurring in all fields of education, how the skills children need have changed, and how online programs are changing higher education. In early education, he discussed the need for a greater focus on non-cognitive skills such

as resilience, creative problem solving, collaboration, cultural competency, and ethical values. He also discussed the importance of viewing education on a continuum, instead of the current divide between primary school, secondary school, and college.

Following the talk, Murray was approached by Dr. Roman M. Cibirka, then Provost for Academic Affairs at GRU. Cibirka asked Murray to give the same talk to a committee currently writing a white paper for GRU's Vision 2030. GRU itself has undergone tremendous change in the last few years. The college was formed in 2012 from Augusta State University and Georgia Health Sciences University.



It launched a strategic plan in 2013, and is continuing to develop its new identity in the world of higher education.

Murray's talk with the school's Vision 2030 committee was so

useful Cibirka invited him to talk to GRU President Ricardo Azziz and the school's council of deans. To switch things up, Murray suggested the group "flip the classroom" and watch his TEDx talk prior to the meeting; then he could facilitate a discussion about similar disruptions occurring in higher education. The meeting, originally scheduled for 20 minutes, ran more than an hour, with Azziz ceding his time so the discussion could continue.

In developing plans for the Flowing Wells campus, Murray invited a variety of industry leaders, experts, youth associations, and leaders from education to participate in focus groups. Because of their prior connection, GRU was a strong supporter. EDS hosted numerous meetings with its dean of education, dean of science and math, chair of biology, and director of athletics to brainstorm how they could collaborate on the campus' development and use.

Cyndi Chance, Dean of the College of Education at GRU, said the university regularly collaborates with around 52 public schools in the training of its teachers, but this was the first time it would partner with an independent school. During the focus groups, Chance was able to contribute her thoughts on the new campus and explore opportunities for GRU's education majors to work with EDS's students. Its students would be exposed to an independent school environment and could participate in research about STEM programs and the focus on building non-cognitive skills. "Our other partnerships have been primarily for training teachers, but this was also focused on joint research. It's an exciting project to be a part of," she said.

GRU's Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Clint Bryant will also partner with EDS on a number of new coaching clinics. GRU students seeking a certification in youth coaching could train at the EDS property working with its staff and students. The collaboration would benefit the college, EDS, and the greater community by providing more resources and education for youth coaches. "The new facility would offer our students a chance to get outside of the classroom in real world situations," said Bryant. "It will benefit the community and help advance the knowledge of youth coaching."



SAIS President Dr. Steve Robinson says EDS's diverse and unique collaborations are prime examples of how independent schools can be instruments for change and growth in their communities. "Collaboration has been celebrated in many forms in education for a long time, whether it's collaboration among students, among faculty, across departments, or with other schools, businesses, or outside groups. It's a practice that fuels creative problem solving and opens doors to new opportunities. Every great success story

in history came from collaboration, whether it was two minds, a team, a department or an organization bouncing ideas off of each other, sharing resources, and seeking a common goal.”

However, while attractive and catchy, Robinson said collaborating requires work, commitment, openness, and humility. “Collaborations are not always the natural way or the easy way. It takes time and skill to work with others, and the more people you involve, the more complicated. But, that’s when success comes down to leadership – leaders who can see where we need to be and inspire us to work together to get there. Independent schools are filled with great leaders and as our schools continue to look outside their doors for growth and opportunity, we will continue to see many meaningful successes.”



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## FastStats: Collaboration and a Public Purpose

by: Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell, Currey Ingram Academy

Published: October, 2014

Although the public purpose of independent schools has been apparent to educators for many years, there has been a surge of interest in initiatives stressing that purpose. From the 2013 NAIS Study on Public Purpose at Independent Schools report, I gathered and re-worked some data to compare SAIS schools with all NAIS schools. Note that NAIS uses “southeast” as a variable and although there is not a perfect correspondence between NAIS schools in the southeast and NAIS schools that are also SAIS, I assume for the purpose of this report they are the same.

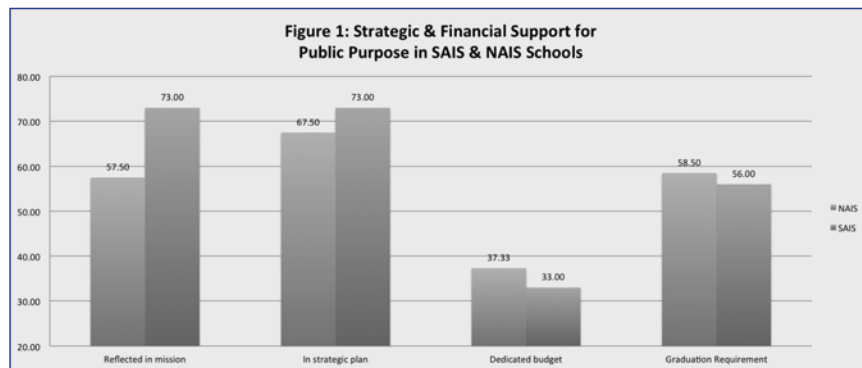


Figure 1 highlights four variables that indicate strategic and financial commitments to public purpose by independent schools. Working from left to right on Figure 1, the reader will see that about 73% of SAIS schools versus 57.5% of NAIS schools reflect public purpose in their missions. Similarly, about 73% of SAIS schools versus 67.5% of NAIS schools note public purpose in their strategic plans. Thus, when it comes to a strategic commitment to public purpose, SAIS schools seem to fare quite well. When it comes to dedicating a budget, however, both SAIS and NAIS schools tend not to do as well. (Although funds for “public purpose” also likely come from other budgets.) Finally, a similar percentage of both SAIS and NAIS schools explicitly require some form of public purpose activity for graduation.

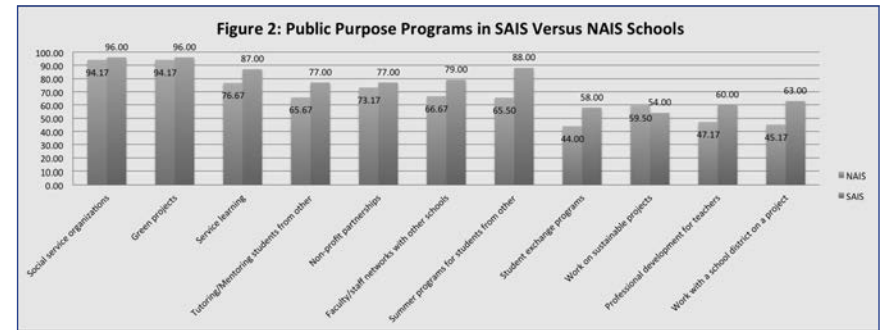


Figure 2 compares SAIS schools and NAIS schools on a number of programs that can be generally described as serving the public purpose. In all but one of these programs, SAIS has a higher percentage of schools providing these opportunities. With social service and green projects, the difference is very small. In fact, in both NAIS and SAIS schools, the participation rate is very high at 95% and higher. The difference is also small for the category non-profit partnerships. For the variable work on sustainable projects, NAIS has a slightly higher percentage of schools participating. For the seven remaining variables, SAIS has anywhere from 10% to 18% more schools participating in various public purpose programs. It is highly unlikely that this kind of systematic difference is due to chance. Something systematic is impacting SAIS data relative to NAIS data, as a whole.

The most likely factor is enrollment differences between SAIS and NAIS schools. The NAIS report used the comparison variable “school enrollment” and concluded that larger schools were more likely to offer a larger array of public purpose programs. The median enrollment in SAIS schools (620 in 2013-2014) is significantly greater than the median enrollment in NAIS schools (380 in 2013-2014). Thus, a viable conclusion is that SAIS, compared with NAIS overall, has a higher percentage of schools participating in strategic and programmatic public purpose initiatives but much of the variation is likely due to the fact that SAIS schools tend to be larger and thus have the resources more typically available at larger schools.



Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell



## Journey to Senegal: My Heifer Experience

by: Dr. Steve Robinson, SAIS

Published: June, 2014



I imagine that most Americans can relate to the feelings evoked when approaching a stop sign and seeing a person holding a sign that reads “work for food” or “homeless and broke.” We have compassion for the plight of the individual, yet we are also skeptical enough to question whether their situation is really so dire. And even if we are convinced that indeed this person has no other means of support, we still feel overwhelmed by two factors; first, we cannot possibly help every person holding a sign on the corner and second, if we give them a dollar today they will still need another dollar tomorrow. How can we give them what they really need: a means to support themselves.

I have just returned from my first trip to Africa where I was privileged to visit several projects administered by Heifer International. As one who travels often, I have had many transformative experiences, but my trip to Senegal exceeded my expectations. Witnessing the dichotomy of a people so hopeful, joyful, and hard working, and the stark limitations of their resources and opportunities was humbling and inspiring. Also, while I have known of Heifer’s work



for some time, witnessing it on the ground level was impressive. I know of no other organization on earth that more clearly embodies the concept of “teaching men to fish” so that they will be fed for a lifetime. Where we sit inside our vehicle wondering how to help that person on the corner, Heifer shows us a way to help.



Some background: Heifer International is a nonprofit global organization that works to eradicate poverty and world hunger in the poorest parts of the world by giving livestock to individuals or communities, and teaching them how to manage the animals, and use them for food and an income. Along with the livestock, the organization teaches multiple principles of sustainability so that its work does not simply alleviate problems, but creates systems that empower people to be self-sufficient. With the gift of two goats, a cow, bees, or a camel, families and communities are able to sustain themselves and improve their communities.

As an educator, I was also familiar with Heifer’s resources for schools. I knew it offered curriculum on sustainability and global issues for teachers and organized experiential camps for students. I also knew its work was well respected and supported by multiple prestigious organizations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Founda-

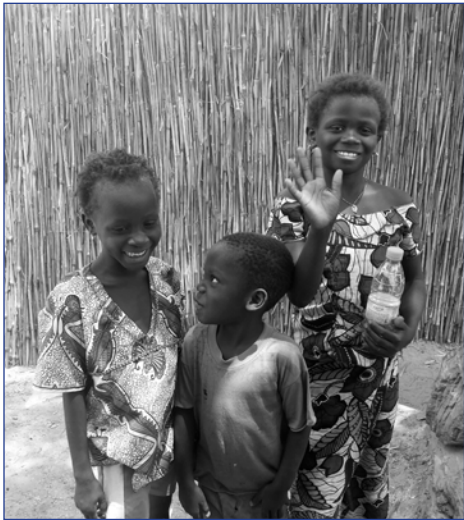


tion. Still I did not expect how deeply their work would resonate.

I arrived in Dakar, the capital of Senegal, on May 24 late in the evening. Early the next morning I began my six-day journey to tour many of the villages where Heifer works. My companions were Elizabeth Bintliff, Vice President of the Africa Area Program,

Rashid Sesay, Regional Director – West Africa, Dr. Humphrey Taboh, Cameroon Country Director, and Gustave Gaye, Interim Senegal Country Director.

I was struck by a number of realities in Senegal. Resources and work are scarce. The population is young, with many children working rather than attending school; school in fact is not compulsory. Upon adulthood, men often migrate to other areas for



work, leaving their wives to tend to their families. Unfinished construction projects are common as structures or homes are built over a period of decades, as funds are available. Livestock roam freely. Horse or donkey drawn carriages are also common, often used as taxis with young men driving them. I was reminded of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and for many here,

they live at the most basic biological and physiological stage. Luxuries in Senegal are being able to send your children to school, or a woman who can heat food with gas instead of spending four hours looking for firewood in an arid landscape, or a village that can leverage bio fuel for electricity to support their hospital. Heifer's emphasis on bio fuel projects, is fascinating, life changing, and an excellent example of green energy.

According to a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency report, the median age in Senegal is around 18, with more than 63 percent of the population under the age of 24, and the average life expectancy around 60. More than 50 percent of the population is illiterate, 14 percent of children under the age of 5 are underweight, and 22 percent of children under the age of 14 must work to support their families. I was also struck by another fact. Often we hear

about the unrest of nations in Africa through our western media outlets. However, all 54 fully recognized nations in Africa have been formed in their current state since 1957, making them all less than 57 years old. For some perspective, the US War Between the States occurred almost 90 years into the United States' existence as a nation. While the people of Africa have ancient histories, their governments and nations are young and developing.

Also the desires of its people are universal. They want to be able to support themselves and their families. They want their children to be fed, safe, and educated. Like children everywhere, their children want to have fun and play. As I was touring one school in Baback Ndangalma, listening to the children playing on the playground, I could close my eyes and be on any playground in the world. Despite languages, color, social status, or economic position, the sound of children laughing and playing tag and games is universally human and always a delight.



It is into this environment, and in fact the poorest villages in Senegal, that Heifer ventures into to begin change. A

few facts: Heifer International, which was founded in 1944, has been working with poor and vulnerable communities for 70 years. Over that time period, it has distributed livestock and resources such as cows, bees, goats, alpacas, chickens, camels, and more to 20.7 million families and 105.1 million individuals in 125 different countries. It currently operates in 12 countries in Africa.

Upon approaching our first village, Loumbal Baladji, I was struck by how happy the people were to see us and how highly they esteemed Heifer's team. The villagers were dressed in their most

beautiful and colorful clothes. Many were in ceremonial dress, with their faces painted. They enthusiastically presented to us what they had learned about nutrition, as well as many of the business successes they had in raising and managing their livestock. A woman, who originally was given one goat, had grown her herd to nine and said the livestock was her security. If a need arose, she now could sell a goat to pay for it. All of the participants kept detailed notes of how they cared for their goats with vaccinations, and vet visits. They kept logs detailing the selling and breeding of the goats. This is one example of Heifer's rigorous training that encourages families to be not only self-sustaining, but also teaches them how to manage their own businesses. There are many more stories like this one and if you have time, you can view



some of them on the Heifer International YouTube Channel.

On another visit we encountered one of the few public schools. These students were among the minority whose

parents could afford to send them for an education. Along with reading, writing, math, and science, they also learned Heifer's 12 Cornerstones of just and sustainable development. Topics include passing on the gift, being accountable, sharing and caring, animal management, nutrition and income, full participation, respect for and supporting the environment, and more.

So where do American schools fit into this work that Heifer is doing? Heifer offers many avenues to become involved. First teachers can download a variety of free curriculum on the plight of the poor, how they can be self-sustaining, why helping the poor and hungry is important, and what we can do to help. Schools can also participate in various reading and gift programs to support a goat or cow for a village or individual. Schools can also organize a field trip to one of Heifer's three learning centers, or two partnership camps, where students can experience first-hand what it feels like to be poor in a developing country.

For example, upon arriving for a stay at Heifer Farm in Rutland, MA, students are educated on the plight of poor children and families in developing countries. Then, they are assigned to different countries such as Thailand, Guatemala, Uganda, or even a refugee camp. They are each given limited supplies based on their country and must barter with other countries to get everything they need for the night. The refugee students are the worst off, they are given nothing and must beg for everything they need, and they cannot speak. The overall experience can be transforming for students, many who have never experienced real need or hunger. Hopefully, they leave with a new awareness of world problems, a desire to be part of the solution, and ideas on how they can take action.

It is not often that I make such a suggestion, however, I encourage all schools to partner with organizations such as Heifer International. Such partnerships are good for our world, and help our faculty and students develop cultural intelligence. The development of global competence and cultural empathy is vital for all of our students so they can understand their responsibilities as global citizens. Lastly, faculty and staff who learn about other cultures, and are immersed in other cultures, are better equipped to teach these values and realities to their students.





## The Think Tank

by: Sarah Stewart, SAIS

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It began as an experiment, a voluntary meeting of educators. There was no set agenda, no expected outcome, no mandatory notes, and no deliverables. The group would simply meet to ask questions and consider possibilities. It would be an environment where people from different disciplines and departments could feel safe to explore ideas. And so, the Think Tank was born at Saint Mary's School in Raleigh, NC.

Shortly after being appointed Head of School in 2012, Dr. Monica Gillespie began to envision a way that Saint Mary's faculty and staff could participate in appreciative inquiry together. She had witnessed the power of such groups at other schools, and sent out an invitation to anyone who wanted to join Saint Mary's first Think



Tank. Thirteen people from different departments, some new to Saint Mary's and others longtime employees, responded.

Due to its open nature the Think Tank's agenda follows the interests of its members. Thus far, its members typically meet five or six times during the school year in a casual setting such as sharing a meal or visiting a nearby attraction, and of course, they explore questions and discuss their challenges. Sometimes they read or research a topic together, and then share their impressions. They also take an annual "field trip" to a different city to visit independent schools and learn about what they are doing.

"As educators we know that ongoing professional development is critical to living out our mission," said Dr. Gillespie. "By using appreciative inquiry and outside resources, the Think Tank develops the capacity to use positive questions as a catalyst for brainstorming, reexamining assumptions, considering multiple perspectives,

and on the whole, generating ideas regarding best practices in thinking and learning."

Dr. Robert Belknap was one of the first members of Saint Mary's Think Tank. He had been teaching English at the school since 2000, and was excited about the opportunity. As with many teachers, his daily duties in the classroom consumed the bulk of his time and energy, and at times he felt disconnected from others in the school or the greater independent school community. The Think Tank was a welcomed outlet to learn more about his colleagues and other schools, while thinking critically and creatively about Saint Mary's and independent school education.

"No one really knew at first what to expect or who would show up, but we had an interesting cross section of people in our school, and together, we shared questions that you can't quite ask elsewhere in a faculty or department meeting," he said. "We asked philosophical questions and experienced a process of sharing that was really quite enjoyable and took on a life of its own."

Sarah Hanawald, Saint Mary's Dean of Teaching and Learning, also joined the Think Tank. One question she wrestled with and hoped to explore was the importance of student autonomy versus the consistency of student experience. She says she enjoyed learning what her colleagues were thinking in casual environments where people could be open. She recalls an early meeting where the group cooked dinner together at Gillespie's home. Such gatherings she said "recaptured a feeling and energy and excitement about learning and exploration, like when you are in an incredible class in college or having a late night debate or discussion with colleagues."

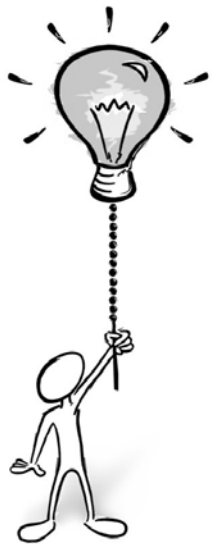




Hanawald was also new to Saint Mary's so participating in the Think Tank helped her quickly gain deep connections with her colleagues and an understanding of the school's culture. "It's huge for relationship building. It's like starting the game on third base."

Think Tank member Scott Orvis, Saint Mary's Director of College Counseling, also enjoyed getting to know his colleagues, plus learning how other schools are operating. "It's been incredible to meet together as a group, go out and do the visits, and gain a greater understanding of where other schools are," he said. "And there's a lot of similarities, a lot of consistency in the challenges that independent schools are facing."

Saint Mary's Think Tank took its first field trip to visit independent schools in Washington D.C. last year, and this year, Think Tank members visited schools in Atlanta. When Gillespie reached out to each school and explained what the group was doing, she was met with a warm and welcoming response. "The willingness of our colleagues and other schools to allow us to come, and for them to give generously of their time was inspiring. We are so grateful for this network and to have these reciprocal relationships with



so many diverse and amazing schools. We can't speak highly enough of the schools we visited and hope we can reciprocate the hospitality in the future."

The Think Tank members carpooled to each destination city and spent two or three days visiting schools and talking to other educators about everything from their pedagogies, to the things they tried that worked, to the things that didn't work. They chose different types of schools so they would gain a wider breadth of experiences. In D.C. they visited ten schools including St. Anselm's Abbey School, Cathedral School, Washington International School, Sidwell

Friends School, and The Madeira School. In Atlanta they visited six schools: The Westminster Schools, The Ben Franklin Academy, Atlanta Girls' School, Holy Innocents' Episcopal School, The Lovett School, and Pace Academy.

Recalling the first trip to D.C., Belknap said, "a lot of us weren't sure what was going to happen so there was a lot of excitement, but also nervousness. We had some overarching questions, but more or less we wanted to get out of our bubble and see how other schools are doing what they do," he said.

The group quickly found the experience to be positive and even rejuvenating. When talking to the people at the schools, Belknap felt like he was encountering long lost relatives who were excited to show them their house and catch up on things. "We met some wonderful people and we talked about aspirations and setbacks and accomplishments and let the people talk about their programs and what was working well, and how they made it work well. It's wonderful to talk to people who have had different experiences, plus you realize that you aren't alone in your challenges



*Members of the St. Mary's School Think Tank swing by the SAIS office*

either. Then we would come back and debrief with each other and share some of the takeaways.”

While the Think Tank is only two years old and is not intended to drive change, it has already led to a number of new developments at Saint Mary’s. Inspired by a visit to North Carolina State University’s James B. Hunt Jr. Library in Raleigh, the school decided to redesign its own library to better fit how students create and share knowledge in the digital age. The school also launched “Exploration Days,” three-hour programs on Saturdays where students and faculty pursue projects or curriculum that can’t be covered in 50 minutes in a classroom. Past programs have included a discussion of heroines through the lens of the production “The Wiz” and well-known movies such as “Star Wars.” Another Saturday the girls were divided into groups of six and went Geocaching in Raleigh. Geocaching is a worldwide treasure hunt where participants use a GPS device (such as their phone) and specific coordinates to find a geocache, a package in a hidden location filled with notes left by the people who find it.

Hanawald said, “The Geocaching day was a great success. It engaged the students because it’s fun, but it also taught them problem solving, technology use, and group dynamics. It is the type of thing you can’t do in an hour in a classroom; you need more time and flexibility. That’s what Exploration Days are all about.”

The school also decided to add some new items to their curriculum based on the Think Tank trips, namely marine science and a computer design and engineering course. The school has also been tinkering with its schedule in an effort to give teachers more time for professional development and students more free time to work on current projects, or pursue new ones.

Next year’s Think Tank will focus on residential life and how to improve the student experience. More than 50 percent of Saint Mary’s students are boarding students. The group plans to visit

other boarding schools, and is even considering inviting a group of students to join them.

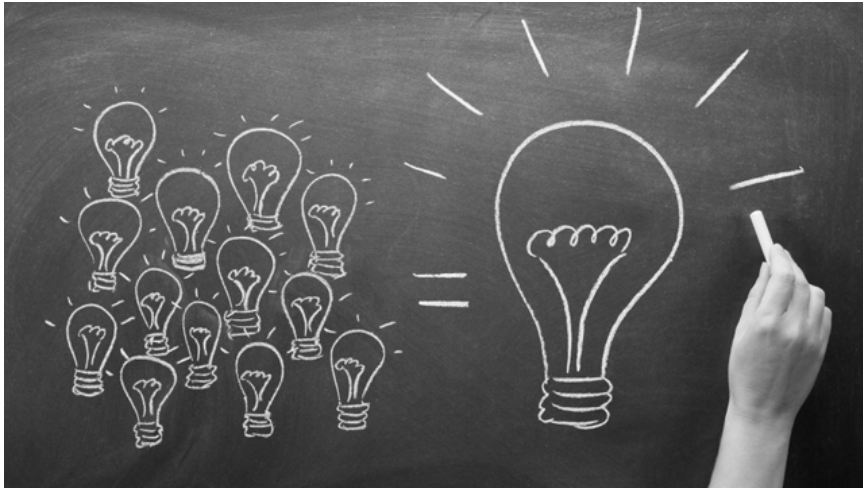
Reflecting on Think Tank, Gillespie says she would recommend it to any school as an incredible form of professional development that is inexpensive, rewarding, and effective. She also says she was glad she participated. Previously she had not participated in similar endeavors because she didn’t want her presence to impede the process. However, in this case as a new head, it helped her understand her school and faculty on a level that could not be attained on campus. And personally, Gillespie found it rewarding to step outside the traditional role of leader, and be part of a group of colleagues where she was supporting, following, and collaborating.

“In a school day, we don’t often take the time to sit and talk about how we do things,” she said. “The Think Tank commitment to spending time together is empowering and transformative for all of us and reminds us why we got into this vocation in the first place.”



## SAINT MARY’S SCHOOL

*Saint Mary’s School was founded in 1842 by an Episcopal priest, Rev. Aldert Smedes, and is one of the oldest all-girl schools in the country. Saint Mary’s housed the daughter of Gen. Robert E. Lee and a family member of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America during the Civil War. Many of its buildings and its chapel are Raleigh Historic Properties and its campus is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its campus is also part of the North Carolina Civil War Trails. The school is located in downtown Raleigh and enrolls 263 residential and day students, grades 9 through 12.*



*Successful innovation is not a single breakthrough. It is not a sprint. It is not an event for the solo runner. Successful innovation is a team sport; it's a relay race.*

# Quyen Nguyen

*Many ideas grow better when transplanted  
into another mind than the one where they  
sprang up.*

# Oliver Wendell Holmes

*We should not only use the brains we have  
but all that we can borrow.*

# Woodrow Wilson

*Most original thinking comes through collaboration and through the stimulation of other people's ideas. Nobody lives in a vacuum. Even people who live on their own—like the solitary poets or solo inventors in their garages—draw from the cultures they're a part of, from the influence of other people's minds and achievements.*

Sir Ken Robinson Ph.D.



The mission of SAIS is to strengthen member schools by providing high quality accreditation processes, comprehensive professional growth opportunities, and visionary leadership development programs.

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*wordle visualization of all of the missions of SAIS member schools*



The SAIS Legacy Club members are retired SAIS Heads of School. They are invited and called on from time to time to share their wealth of knowledge. In so doing, they pass the torch to the next generation.

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