

A LETTER FROM THE COMMITTEE

Dear Members of the St. Mary's Episcopal School Community,

It is a very exciting time to be at SMES! The 2024-2025 school year has opened with incredible energy and joy. Our community has grown stronger with each passing year, and we now serve more families than ever. As we approach the 50th anniversary of the school's founding, SMES eagerly looks forward to its next chapter of success.

Over the past three years, the SMES Board has been working diligently to lay the foundation for the school's next strategic plan. Planning for the future of the school is one of the most significant responsibilities of the Board. This process included reaching out to our accreditation body, the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools, for guidance and consultation by Andrew Wooden and Marci McLean, expert consultants from The Education Group, who assisted us with our Head of School Search. We are excited for the future of SMES under the leadership of Mr. Michael Zeigler as our new Head of School. Mr. Zeigler will actively collaborate with the Board and with SMES Staff and Faculty in meeting the needs of the community and executing the goals of the strategic plan with great success.

To assist us with developing our strategic plan for the next three years, the SMES Board engaged Dave Davies, an experienced consultant with The Education Group. Over the past year, he has worked beside the Board and community to develop a strategic plan to strengthen communication on our mission, core educational philosophies, and Episcopal

Identity, guide our growth, expand our extracurricular activities, and excel in our academic programs. The process included in-depth interviews with Board members, which then led to the development of a stakeholder survey generating over one hundred responses. Mr. Davies then visited campus in January 2024 to lead meaningful discussions with six focus groups including parents, faculty, administrators, and Board members. He also met with the Board for a 3-hour retreat session, during which we reviewed the mission and philosophy of SMES and discussed the survey data. The information brought forth by the focus group discussions and survey responses led to the development of the “planks,” or goals, of the strategic plan. Over the past five months, the Board has reviewed, discussed, and refined the planks with input and feedback from school leadership. The final plan was approved in May 2024, and we are proud to share with you in the pages that follow the goals for the future of SMES.

We are excited about the clarity that this process has brought to the direction in which the school should proceed. We also extend our sincere thanks to the many individuals who have helped shape SMES’ strategic path, and we remain extremely grateful for the care and dedication shown by our school community. Our foundation is solid, and our future is very bright.

Sincerely,



Amy Costner-Lark
President, 2024-2025



Ashley Weedn, MD, MPH
Chair, Strategic Planning Committee