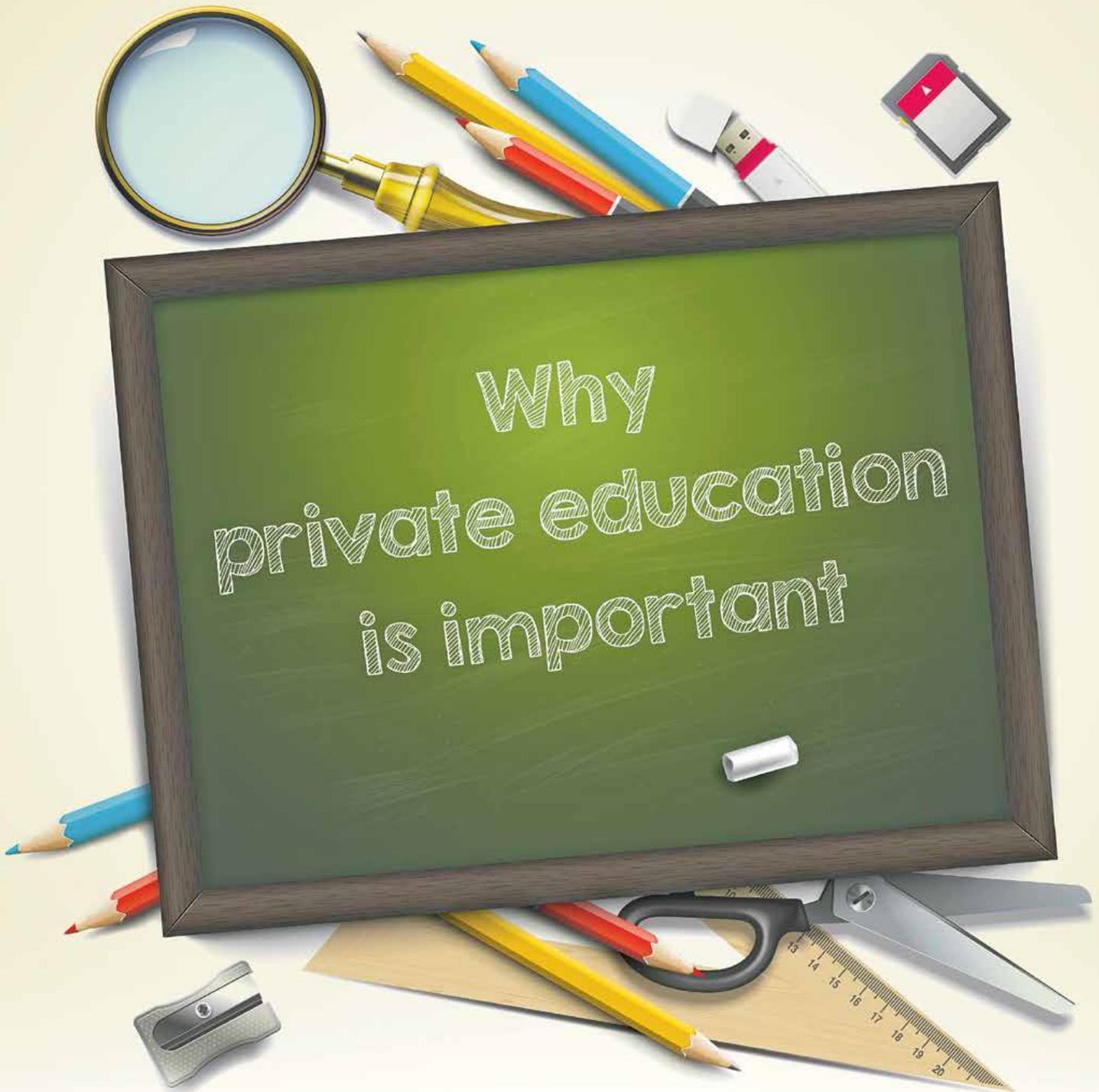


TABLE OF EXPERTS

ST. LOUIS BUSINESS JOURNAL



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SAUL MIROWITZ
JEWISH COMMUNITY SCHOOL



THE EXPERTS



SR. HELENA MONAHAN

Monahan is an alumna of Incarnate Word Academy and assumed its presidency in 2012. She holds a Ph.D. in English from Saint Louis University and a law degree with an emphasis on higher education law and governance from the University of Houston Law Center. Prior to returning to IWA, Monahan served for more than 30 years at the University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, the largest Catholic University in Texas. While there, she held the positions of English professor, executive vice president for academic and student affairs, legal counsel, and most recently was the Chancellor from 2008-2011. Monahan was the general superior of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word from 2002-2008. She has held membership on the board of trustees of CHRISTUS Health, Incarnate Word Foundation in St. Louis, and is currently a member of the Midwest Bank Centre Community Council.



DAVID LAUGHLIN

Laughlin began as president of St. Louis University High School in 2005. He has 25 years of experience in Jesuit secondary educational administrative experience. After teaching theology for two years at Duchesne Academy in Omaha, Nebraska, he began a formal association with Jesuit secondary education as a theology teacher, pastoral director, dean of students and assistant principal at Creighton Prep in Omaha, Nebraska. From 2000 to 2005, he served as principal of Rockhurst Jesuit High School in Kansas City, Missouri.

Laughlin serves on the boards of Jesuit Secondary Education Association in Washington, D.C., DeSmet Jesuit High School, Cor Jesu Academy, Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Brophy Prep, in Phoenix and Kenrick Glennon Seminary.

In 2013, he chaired the National Jesuit President's Meeting.

David holds his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Creighton University in Omaha.



CHERYL MAAYAN

Maayan is the head of Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School, St. Louis' first pluralistic Jewish independent school. Through her leadership, she guided two schools (one Reform and one Conservative) through a merger, creating a new reality for day school education in St. Louis and the promise of a generation of Jewish leaders who celebrate the diversity of our community.

Before assuming the role as head of school seven years ago, Maayan was a classroom teacher for 12 years. She grew up in St. Louis and earned a bachelor's from Washington University and a master's in Jewish Education from Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. She is the recipient of the JPro Visionary Award, Grinspoon-Steinhardt Award for Excellence in Jewish Education and the Stuart I. Raskas Outstanding Day School Teacher Award.



MICHAEL VACHOW

Appointed in 2007, Vachow is the fourth head of Forsyth School since its founding in 1961. With more than 20 years experience as an educator, Vachow holds a bachelor's with Distinction in English from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, and a master's from the Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College. Prior to joining Forsyth, he served as head of upper school for Lake Forest Country Day School, a Pre-K-Grade 8 independent school located in the Chicago suburbs. Vachow has taught leadership workshops for the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), is involved with the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS), and currently serves as president of the board of the Independent Schools of St. Louis (ISSL).



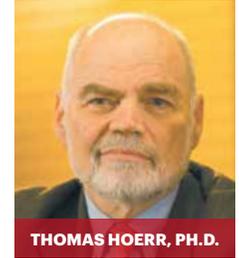
DIANE COOPER, ED.D.

Cooper is principal of St. Joseph's Academy, a premiere all-girls, Catholic, college preparatory high school sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

Prior to her appointment at St. Joseph's Academy, Cooper was an assistant professor of education at Webster University and directed the Office of Field Experiences.

Cooper was head of school at the Columbus School for Girls, an independent, college preparatory girls' day school in Columbus, Ohio. She led a faculty of 98 and a student body of 660 students. Previously, Cooper served as head of school at Saint Edward's School, an independent, coed, preK-12, college preparatory day school serving 820 students on three campuses in Vero Beach, Florida.

Cooper currently serves as vice president of the board of the DeBusk Foundation in Dallas, a foundation whose specific focus is funding programs for gifted elementary school students.



THOMAS HOERR, PH.D.

Hoerr has been the head of school at New City since 1981. The New City faculty works to prepare students for success in life, not just in school. Previously, Hoerr was a principal in the School District of University City and a teacher. His doctorate is from Washington University, where he also founded and directed the Non-Profit Management Program.

Following the words of playwright Edward Albee, who said, "I write to find out what I am thinking," Hoerr has written more than 90 articles and four books: "Becoming A Multiple Intelligences School," "The Art of School Leadership," "School Leadership for the Future" and "Fostering Grit: How do I prepare my students for success?" He writes a monthly column, "The Principal Connection," for Educational Leadership. Hoerr facilitates the ISACS (Independent Schools Association of the Central States) New Heads Network and the ASCD Multiple Intelligences Professional Interest Community.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF ST. LOUIS

Why private education is important

PHOTOS BY
DILIP VISHWANATH | SLBJ

▶ WHAT IS THE ADDED VALUE OF PRIVATE EDUCATION?

Michael Vachow: I think what we talk with parents about, who come into our admissions office, if they haven't had experience with the Independent Schools of St. Louis or elsewhere, is the latitude that faculty are given to create curriculum and to be empowered to really be the center of the school, so that the classroom itself is the epicenter of an independent school. We certainly keep all of that honest with standardized testing that gives us outside measures of how successful we are with meeting standards that we've selected. That certainly puts a lot of onus on heads of school to hire great faculty. But once having done that, we let them drive the bus with our guidance from the outside.

Diane Cooper: I think another big advantage is that it gives parents choice to select schools that are appropriate for the needs of their children. It allows



them to choose, for example, a faith-based school or a single-gender school or a smaller school or a larger school. It allows them to look at curriculum that is flexible, has been developed particularly for that community, whatever those

shared values are.

And I think that private schools, being smaller are more flexible; probably tend to be able to respond more quickly to different needs and different concerns; and allows us as schools to

really set our standards where we want them to be rather than having them set for us by somebody outside of the school environment. And I think those things give us a great advantage to making a personalized education for each child.

Cheryl Maayan: I think that raising children in a community of shared values has a tremendous impact on a their moral development, on their self-confidence, on their leadership skills. I'm particularly struck by the way in which our students react to profound and intelligent debate and conversation. No one laughs when a student says something particularly deep. In fact, that's celebrated. And, you know, our students share - they read for pleasure and they share their ideas about books. Because they're part of a community that embraces education as a value, they experience minimal disruptions due to behavior. They really want to develop their own voice and their sense of responsibility toward the community.

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Sister Helena Monahan: I think a private education or private school gives the opportunity to create a culture, an entire environment or culture of excellence, which has its norms. We have the freedom to hold our community to those norms, and to buy into our mission—into who we are. It gives freedom. This is a value-centered place, and we invite you to it and we want you here. But there are expectations.



“I think evaluation is at the heart of effective teaching, and I think it’s something that we all have to learn how to do better.”

SISTER HELENA MONAHAN,
Incarnate Word Academy

David Laughlin: We’ve been able through competitive admissions to create a rigorous academic environment that really develops a culture of achievement, and it is that value-based character, faith and intellectual development that’s a hallmark of our school as a Jesuit school.

I would also say to people who want more concrete data that they might look at the National Association of Independent School’s national educational longitude Study of 1988 that followed students and asked this very question: What is the added value of private education? That study looks at everything from academic outcomes to success in college, post graduate work, as well as more nuanced areas of young people’s lives in terms of their total development.

And we’ve replicated some of that research at our own school as a college prep high school with a national average of about 50 percent of undergraduate students who achieve a four-year degree. We’ve tracked that our alumni are graduating in the 93 percent rate with about 78 percent of them graduating in four years or less when the national average is five-and-a-half years.

Tom Hoerr: We’re all aware that there are some really good, fine public schools. And what families need to do is step back and look at what’s good for them and their children.

I think the advantage of independent schools now is we’re so mission based. And our missions lead to communities of learners and communities of people who grow together. So I think when parents step back and say, what is it that I want my kid to be able to do beyond the academics, if they want their child to be successful working with lots of people, being comfortable taking risks, I think look-

ing at a mission-based school, a community of learners is really where they want to be and independent schools offer that routinely.

▶ WHAT IS YOUR SCHOOL'S UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION?

Sister Helena Monahan: Our goal is to create an excellent college preparatory education for any student who is academically qualified and whose family wants her, in our case, to be part of that environment.

We want to provide access to as many students as possible, and that creates an

environment where we welcome diversity, economic diversity, racial diversity, cultural diversity – and even though we are a Catholic school – religious diversity, to create a real world environment where everyone who wants to be with us is welcome and supported as much as we financially possibly can.

Diane Cooper: St. Joseph’s Academy is concerned about living out the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph, who are sponsors of our institution, which means creating opportunities for young

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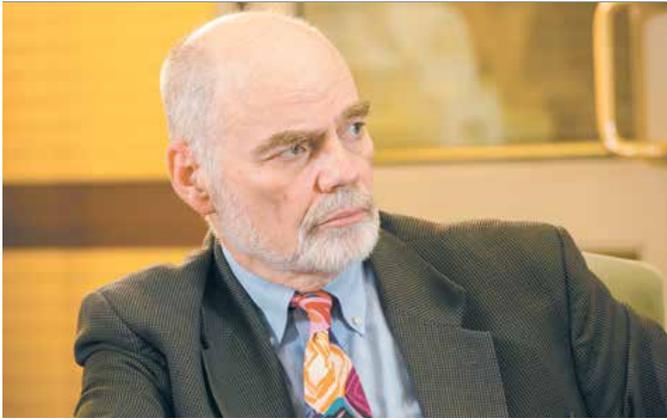
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AGE 3 – GRADE 6





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women to be value-based women leaders, to step out into the world with a strength and the confidence and the independence that is firmly grounded in their religious faith and in a moral integrity and moral history that they understand and have lived out for four years and our girls have had an opportunity to practice, to take risks in those areas and maybe to fail occasionally. I think for us, as Tom was saying, the mission is the key. And that's our job to form young women leaders who will go out and make an impact in the world. And that all comes to us from the Sisters of St. Joseph

who founded the school in 1840. So it's not something new; it's not a fad. It's who we are and what we've been forever, and it's something that we hold in very tight respect.

Tom Hoerr: We believe who you are is more important than what you know. You do need to know. You need to have the academic skills absolutely, but we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that our goal is to create good people. And we need to have that as part of our curriculum. The first page of our report card, if you will, speaks to that beginning by talking about kids' confidence or ability to work with others, motivation, and I think that's something that we all embrace is that we're not just producing successful students, successful test takers, we're producing successful people who will become strong and good adults.

Michael Vachow: I think the way that our independent schools are counter cultural in the current parenting times is that we have the freedom to challenge kids. And as Diane said, to speak very openly about the very strong potential, in fact, the reality that your children will fail at our schools frequently. And that that's part of our efforts to help them learn how to confront adversity, to break problems down, to make their way through whatever kind of difficulty it is, whether it's a social conflict or a math problem.

And frankly, I think in our times, it's difficult for some of our counterparts in other areas of education to do that. We have very clear values inside of our schools that we ask parents to look at very closely and ask themselves the question, "Is this reflective of your family's values?" If it is not, this is probably not the school for you.

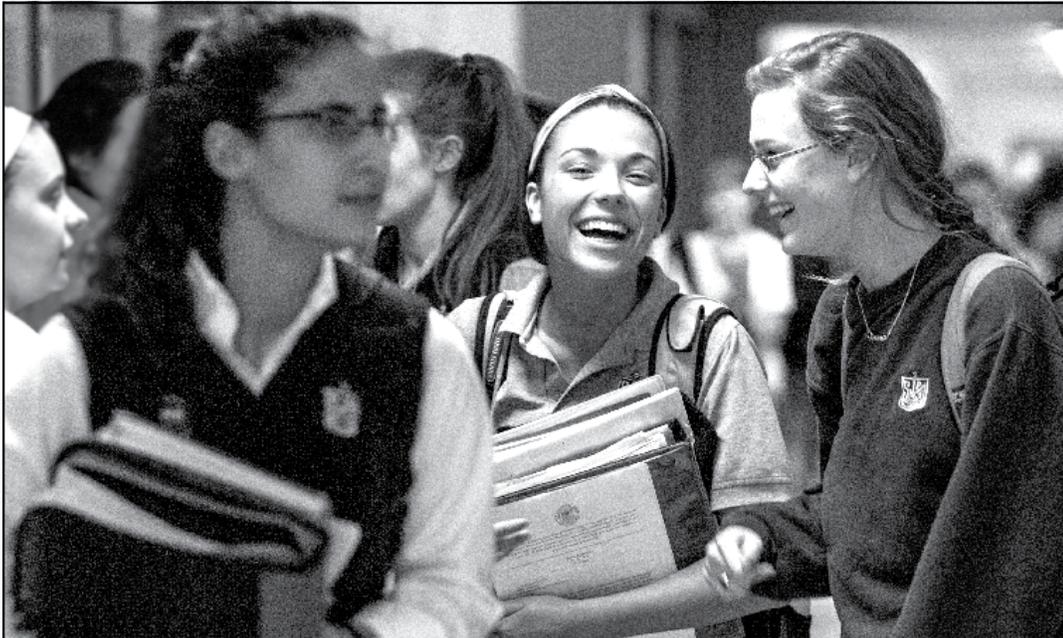
"I think the way that our independent schools are counter cultural in the current parenting times is that we have the freedom to challenge kids."

MICHAEL VACHOW,
Forsyth School

And thankfully, in St. Louis, parents have extraordinary choices amongst a number of private schools, charters, public schools, religiously-based schools, diocesan schools, independent schools. And there's very likely a school for your family. It may not be ours.

But then once you do find that community that has agreed at the outset that it's inspired, not just that it sort of begrudgingly agrees to live under this code, but is inspired by it because it's reflective of their own family's values. Then you can grow together.

David Laughlin: In terms of shaping values as a Jesuit school, the coined phrase we would use is "men for others." And I think fundamentally one



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of those shaped values in forming intellect and social awareness is to ask adolescents, at a time when they may normally be focused on themselves, to think outside of themselves for the greater or common good.

As a value-centered culture, we have high standards, high expectations, high accountability and high achievement. The culture at SLUH is one where it is cool to be smart. Our students push one another to succeed academically, and there is a healthy sense of academic competitiveness. I would also agree with what my colleagues have already expressed. As a private school, SLUH is also a place that allows kids to really face challenges and learn from struggle. And that's an important characteristic of the value education that we provide our students.

St. Louis U. High practices need-blind admission and we don't cap financial assistance, so we're working with a great geographic diversity in our school – nearly 90 ZIP codes and over 170 feeder schools. But we're also working with tremendous economic diversity, something that we're really proud of and fortunate to have support for in the community.

In terms of our value proposition, again, as a Jesuit school, we're part of the largest network of education in the world. We have a premier academic curriculum at a midpoint price in the St. Louis private school market, we have high measurable outcomes when it comes to education (i.e. ACT average of 30), and we're able to provide significant financial assistance (\$3.2 million for 2014-2015).

Cheryl Maayan: Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School provides an outstanding general and Jewish education for our students. We exist to nourish a generation of ethical leaders. We want our students to grow up to be the kind of leaders we wish we had more of today. So, we send the message to them every day that they have the power to make a positive impact on whatever community they're in, starting with the classroom community, and that they should exercise that power.

They have a solid grounding in the texts and values of their heritage, and they study Hebrew every day from kindergarten through eighth grade. They become confident leaders, and subsequently add to the diversity of all the communities they find themselves in for the rest of their lives.

► **IF I WALKED THROUGH A SCHOOL, WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR? AND HOW SHOULD PARENTS AND KIDS FIND THAT BEST FIT?**

Tom Hoerr: You need to go to the individual school, you need to walk through the halls, you need to visit classrooms.

And what I always suggest is that people look for engagement. I talk about the smile quotient: a kid smiling or the adult smiling. It doesn't mean a lack of

rigor, but it means they're enjoying what they're doing, they're learning.

David Laughlin: I'd say look at our students, look at our class sizes, look at the facility, look at the diversity. But get a sense for those students. Is this a place where they're comfortable? Are they focused? Do they appear to be enjoying it? Are they engaged with the adults in the building? That's the most important thing.

I'm at the high school level, so we

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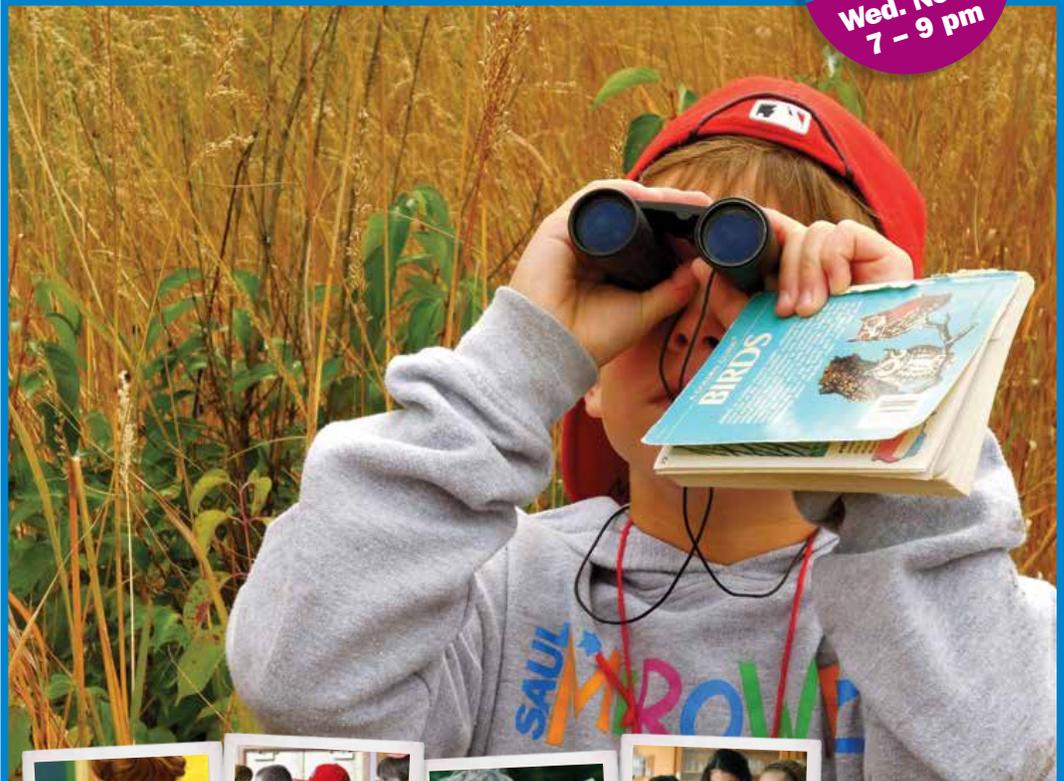
"We're a place that allows kids to really face challenges and learn from struggle. And that's an important characteristic of the value education that we provide our students."

DAVID LAUGHLIN,
Saint Louis University High School



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have 12- and 13-year-olds looking at our school who may look at certain aspects that excite them, but parents need to look at the curriculum, the co-curricular opportunities, and the value center of the school. That's precisely the match that a parent should be trying to find. And I would recommend parents look at these opportunities, not just in a four-year window, but an eight- or a 12-year window of collegiate or post-graduate work. What's that foundation?

Diane Cooper: I really think that the relationships are something you want to look at, too. You can tell when you go into a school how teachers and students interact.

And if it's a respectful, a warm, a cordial relationship, that is very meaningful. Especially, again, we have adolescents, and belonging, a sense of being part of something bigger than yourself is extremely important with that age-group.

What are teachers doing to engage students, and how much are students acting on that engagement? And do people seem happy? Does it feel like it's a place where people basically want to be there, and they're not there just because they have to be, and that they're being challenged to grow as a human being and as a student.

And parents really need to go through and see that because I don't believe 12- and 13-year-old can necessarily make that decision for themselves. And I think sometimes parents can abdicate that responsibility by going on what a child likes, which may be how a student center looks or what the athletic program is; whereas a parent looks at it much broader, deeper.

Sister Helena Monahan: And I think just walking around and seeing how people greet one another. Will the students look at you and say hello? Not all of them are able to, but they grow to being able to in that kind of an environment. And they welcome you. They wel-

come an adult to their school. And how even the teachers – we all get preoccupied on days, but to be aware enough to greet one another with a smile and a welcoming environment. People need to be happy. It's important.

Cheryl Maayan: Real learning feels good. It's intrinsically satisfying, and that should be reflected in the demeanor of the students. You know, the thing you want to look for is to see the students engaged in intelligent debate, in projects, in lessons. If you're seeing the student is there to watch the adults work, something is backwards in the school. When you leave the school, you want to remember how you felt there because chances are, your child will feel that way, too.

Tom Hoerr: When you're selecting a school for your child, that's your number one priority. But you also want to select a school for you. A family needs to be comfortable. We all want parent involvement, and so parents need to feel that this is my school, too. I'm welcome. I'm part of the community.

Michael Vachow: I think it's very important at a high school, but probably even more salient in an elementary school where parents are understandably still actively involved daily with sometimes the very, sort of rudimentary activities. Like, how am I going to get my child to school with all this stuff? You very much need to feel that this is a place where, as an adult, you feel comfortable and you feel that you're amongst peers and people that you can get to know.

We're often congratulated by our secondary school counterparts at how well trained our parents are for annual giving and for volunteering, because we helped them learn all that. They're often brand new to those kinds of adult relationships they create with each

other and with the faculty, and that's a really, really important part of an elementary school.

I'll just make one broader point about what to look for. I feel very strongly, and this is something that's often lost in the educational conversation right now, that schooling should be as much about creating good citizens. And so it should be evident when you're in a good school, that there is a very clear social curriculum. That the teacher is making an effort to develop community for children to learn how to be good friends with each other, and then to grow that kind of social fabric as they become capable of magnanimity and all of those other qualities to think outside themselves, the importance of compromise, the ability to negotiate and to be reflective.

► HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS?

Sister Helena Monahan: We have an opening event for first-year parents by themselves, freshmen by themselves, and then all the parents. And we have close to 100 percent involvement by our parents. I believe meeting with them frequently is very, very important. We have town hall meetings throughout the year. We communicate in a written report from the principal every week with the parents. I write letters to the parents, some of them aimed at

"Real learning feels good. It's intrinsically satisfying, and that should be reflected in the demeanor of the students."

CHERYL MAAYAN,

Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School

fundraising, but also aimed at any major event that's occurring. And if a major event does occur, you're immediately engaging the parents to understand where we stand as a school, and how their daughters might be impacted. I think parent communication is an art, and we try to do it extremely well. It's challenging all the time.

Diane Cooper: I think the key thing is authentic communication with parents that's predictable, like the weekly mes-



sage from the principal. If the only time we communicate with parents is when there's a problem or we want money from them, you're not going to have a relationship. Communication should foster relationships. So I think what Sister is saying is absolutely right in them having the special meetings with different groups of parents who have different needs, different concerns. What a senior parent is worried about is relatively different than what a freshman parent is worried about. Also having an open door policy that people can come in and see you and talk to you about things. To encourage teachers to communicate directly, because they're the ones who work every day with the students, and it's really important for parents to get a response in a very reasonable amount of time. We're an instantaneous society today, and parents parents often like to know what happened. Why their daughter is facing a challenge, and they want to figure out, you know, how they can help. We have to be honest in that communication so that parents trust us.

Because I think we have to, as schools, build a trust relationship with our parents that what we're telling them is the best we know about a situation or a goal or direction or where we're going as a school, and then parents will respond to that trust by trusting us.

David Laughlin: We communicate in a variety of capacities, including regular mail, and a variety of electronic and social media. Whether it's a Counseling newsletter that goes home or the Mothers' or Fathers' Clubs sending information, or the Principal's Office sending regular communications, the need for information is pretty constant.

I would also say one of our philosophies at the high school level, when we take a 14-year-old in as a freshman, is to think about where we want him to be four years from now when he's headed off to college. And so it's this balancing act where want to make sure we don't exclude the student from that conversation so that they're learning self-advocacy, they're learning problem solving,



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and they're learning to handle pertinent information and be a communicator.

Helping a student develop his communication skills is, for us, a consideration when we think about communicating with parents. We focus on how the student is involved in that conversation so that when he heads off to college at 18, he is set. Frankly according to federal educational laws, parents have very few communicative rights, even though they're writing the college tuition checks. So we focus on making sure our students are a part of that equation.

Michael Vachow: I think communication is almost so simple, almost reflexive at this point, I think we're often confronted with the matter of when we choose not to communicate. If you think about a scenario in which the teachers take the children on a bird watching trip into Forest Park, for instance, something that happens at Forsyth frequently because we're across the street. Is there something that's taken away from that experience if the teacher is tweeting photos live during the course of that field trip and immediately sort of potentially taking something away from that child to reflect on that experience individually, because now it's being shared and now his parents are involved somehow? So I think good schools think carefully about the school as a trial opportunity, as a place apart from your family, a world that you get to own yourself and to develop a community there. Not that you aren't going to share it with your parents and that we won't invite them into it, but we need to be careful not to give it all away. This is something that, you know, for instance we feel strongly about when it comes to the communication of a child's assessment. Many schools have chosen to make that information available live. I think it makes sense to think carefully about how much responsibility you're going to give children to communicate their progress. And maybe they ramp up to it, and you help them, their parents understand their progress along the way.

Tom Hoerr: Agreeing with everything that we're all saying, we send home electronic communications very frequently. One of the things I know we all know is, is that communication is a two-way street. And part of that is how parents communicate with us and what options are being offered. We have, for example, intake conferences the third week of school. And those are intentionally held before we know the kids, and we say to the parents, "We want to talk – we want you to talk 75 percent of the time. We want to hear from you." And I think it's really important, even in today's age, that we let parents know that their voice needs to be heard. We want to hear from them as well. They're partners in learning, so good communication, it's two-way.

Cheryl Maayan: For us, communication is about relationship building

and keeping that connection. We want our parents to be apprised of the exciting things going on in their children's lives, and we want to be apprised as well of what's going on in the children's homes lives. So excellent communication means that we need to use all of these electronic tools, e-newsletters and Facebook, but we also need to be a physical presence in the parents' lives and be there to greet them in the morning and to dismiss our kids at the end of the day.

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We invite parents in for coffees and discussions throughout the year.

► **WHAT ARE THE CURRENT BEST PRACTICES FOR EVALUATING TEACHER PERFORMANCE?**

Diane Cooper: One of the things we are starting to work on is developing within a research-based framework, a system that is consistent, fair, open and is a dialog among teachers. We are using Marzano framework. The Danielson framework is also available. I think the point of it is that we have collegial and professional conversations about the work we're doing and that we allocate resources to it. One of those resources is time. So that isn't meeting after school to talk about best practices and teaching, but it's part of our school day. We find time during the day to do that. We give lots of feedback. Teachers, like any other human being, like to know what they're doing well and where they need to improve. And they can get that feedback, not just from an administrator, but from a colleague. And so we need to have these professional conversations amongst colleagues, and we need to really pull each other to excellence and to have opportunities for formative assessment.

So I don't think effective teacher evaluation is just end-of-the-year summative, "You did this right, you did this wrong, you did this OK." Because research shows that most teachers get above-average scores on evaluations, and it isn't about test scores because children do well on tests for a lot of reasons that don't have anything to do with that teacher.

We need to really think of it in terms of developing our professional folks into the very best teachers they can become by having that ongoing professional conversation about what research tell us, our strategies, our ways of assessing those student achievements, and always, always, always keeping student achievement at the center. And when student achievement is at the center, we can always

tell if we're being effective in the classroom. And I think that's the direction that we're going.

"I think the advantage of independent schools now is we're so mission based. And our missions lead to communities of learners and communities of people who grow together."

THOMAS HOERR,
New City School

Sister Helena Monahan: I think evaluation is at the heart of effective teaching, and I think it's something that we all have to learn how to do better. And so that it is not a threatening thing at all. It's a formative thing as you mentioned. But I think it has to occur. And I believe that many of the problems that have faced colleagues in our public schools is the lack of effective evaluation which can bring about positive change. And so, I think that's important both from a principal or assistant principal level, or a department chair level, but also from a peer level. That peers help each other be better teachers as part of a professional learning community.

David Laughlin: We spend an awful lot of time, in the first evaluative process we make, which starts with our hiring process. When we hire a faculty member, we have peer colleagues and administrators involved, but we also include our students. No one is hired on our faculty without teaching a class or taking time to coach a sport, or if it's in theater, working with kids. And then we listen to those kids because they know our culture and they're very driven, and they're an important part of that process for us. It's one thing for someone to have a set of qualifications on paper; it's another thing for them to translate and relate to a 15-year-old.

Those are two very different skill sets.

Beyond that, we have really high expectations for professional development, which is an evaluative source. It's a value of, I think, all schools but certainly independent schools, that we resource professional development. Our faculty are required to pursue their master's degree within five years of hiring. So 95 percent of our faculty have a master's degree. Again, so much of the effectiveness of a teacher is related to them feeling themselves grow. I loved your earlier quote: "Real learning feels good and is intrinsically satisfying." That's no different for me or my faculty than it is for my students. And so we also place great emphasis on what we are doing to make sure that the great people we hire have the resources behind them to go out and to excel. And then we do use peer-to-peer evaluation, department chair evaluation, administrative evaluation. We'll look at effectiveness and outcomes, but not in a bubble. It has to have all those other pieces for us to provide an effective evaluation.

Cheryl Maayan: When we teach students, we differentiate the learning. So, therefore, we need to differentiate teacher evaluation as well. Time is very precious, so all the time we spend with teachers should be designed to improve student learning. Our newer teachers benefit from some of the wonderful tools out there. Like the one we currently use, which is Robert Marzano's Effective Supervision. But our more experienced teachers benefit from a very different kind of supervision and evaluation, and that includes establishing targeted goals, working on a particular unit or a lesson, testing it out in front of other teachers as a lesson critique, doing professional rounds in the school, just like doctors do in a hospital. So, just like we know not all of our students are in the same place, and we tailor our learning to them, so we need to tailor our supervision to our teachers.

► **HOW IS THE EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHANGING IN ST. LOUIS?**

Michael Vachow: I think we're at a point of radical transmission, probably the most important in the last 50 years or more in St. Louis. The rival charters, the fact that some of them are thriving, and that some have been allowed to perish as was the model, because they're sponsored by universities and colleges.

And so we've seen the impact of charters on parish elementary schools throughout the city of St. Louis, the archbishop's desire to have some of them merge, and that playing out certainly inside the secondary school landscape.

Some charters have had an impact on the independent schools. And, you know, their proximity to some of our schools, and the fact that many of them are really starting to pick up some momentum.

I think the growing disparity in wealth in the nation is also made evident in our schools. There are many, many Americans who have extraordinary wealth and who can comfortably afford independent school educations. And it's a challenge for independent schools not to simply welcome everybody who can pay those tuitions. So finding socioeconomic diversity and conveying its value to parents is currently a challenge.

I really truly believe, when you think about St. Louis, we have more independent schools per capita than all but Baltimore, I believe. We're existing in a city that you know, like a couple of others in the country, the Catholic Church was the original public educator, and the public schools came later.

All of that's beginning to shift after really 50 to 100 years. And I think it's going to be really important for all of us to think about that. It's certainly something that the Independent



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Schools of St. Louis, we've been thinking about very closely in how we can help each other and how we can be a part of the educational landscape, not just as we're so often viewed by the outside world as kind of castles on a hill some place.

Cheryl Maayan: One significant change for the St. Louis independent school community is the recent merger of Reform Jewish Academy and Solomon Schechter Day School to form Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School. We brought together two small schools to create a more robust sustainable school in a state-of-the-art facility. With the help of philanthropists and Jewish Federation of St. Louis, we were able to provide the tools for excellence in education immediately from Day 1 of the merged school. And not only to bring together the best of both schools, but to elevate what either school was able to do independently. Now St. Louis has a vibrant, robust pluralistic Jewish community school among the many options of high-quality independent schools..

"That's our job to form young women leaders who will go out and make an impact in the world."

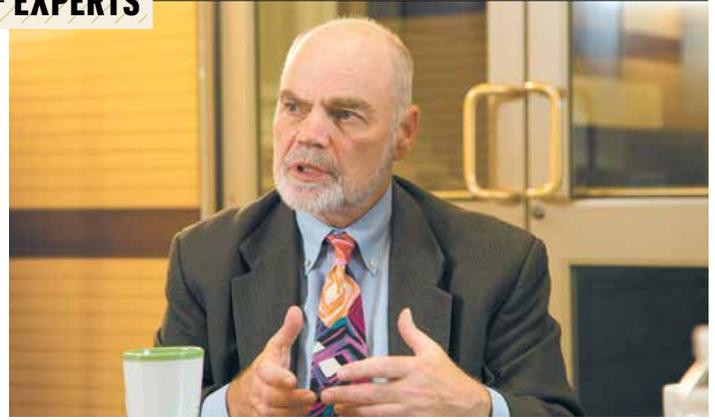
DIANE COOPER,
St. Joseph's Academy

Sister Helena Monahan: I think the landscape of education is responding to the extreme complexity of the landscape of the culture of the city, and the county of course, and how that is changing and evolving. And I think the challenge, and this goes back to one of the early questions we talked about, but the challenge is to embrace all of that diversity and lift it all to, not to an equality place because each child is an individual, but to a place of respect and mutuality, where we honor each other's customs and values. And I think that is the rich and the poor and the culturally diverse, the racially diverse, the religiously diverse. And children from those families, which are struggling, and bring the results of that struggle into the classroom. Those children are no longer isolated into pockets. I think they're throughout the environment that we're all serving and that we all draw from, and we have them in our institutions. We are not somewhere up on a hill anymore as we used to be. So, it's studying the culture and valuing the diversity of it and wanting to bring it together in a meaningful way that can move society into the future in a creative manner.

Tom Hoerr: Surely parents have more choices, and I think that's where competition helps all of us. I also think when you think about the landscape

nationally, education is under much more scrutiny than it used to be. Some of that, perhaps, is a function of the economic downturn, but I think in general, parents ask more questions. Part of that is also technology, and I think we benefit. We want parents to ask; we want parents to want to know. The more they ask and question and want to be involved and raise standards, we all again benefit.

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► **SOMEONE SUGGESTS THAT WITH A VETO APPROVED BY THE MISSOURI HOUSE, PUBLIC FUNDING FOR PRIVATE EDUCATION IS TO BECOME A REALITY. HOW DOES THAT AFFECT YOU?**

Michael Vachow: That's the end of independence. Pending our hard efforts to raise funds and to communicate the value of our institutions, we get to chart their course. And the availability of public funds is the door opening to the intrusion of the state.

And I know I sound like a Libertarian, but the fact of the matter is, that is the greatest strength: Our independence from those outside influences that are our very strength.

David Laughlin: I think it is important that we all continue to think creatively about this topic because of the number of students attending private schools in the State of Missouri. We have to be careful because the independence that we do maintain is what allows our schools to be unique. There are questions of affordability, financial assistance, and

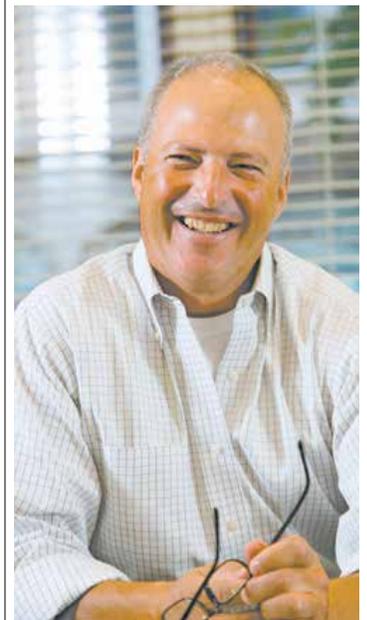
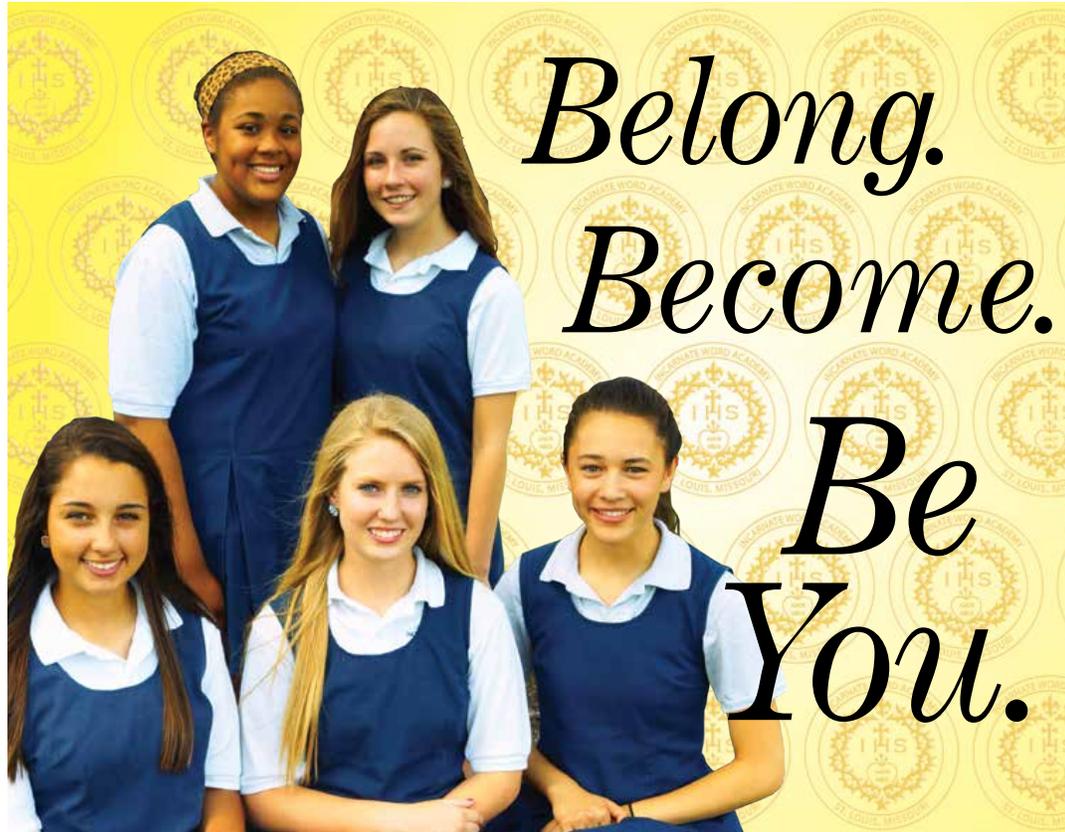
tuition horizons, which are all part of the educational landscape.

This creativity and need is something that the business community in St. Louis already recognizes. There are great civic partners supporting education in St. Louis. We have faculty engaged with corporations, health care and educational programming. We have students engaged in internships and professional experiences to see how the education they receive today can be applied as they think about their future. At SLUH, we are working together to deepen the important connections between education, commu-

nity and future work force.

Diane Cooper: Another underlying consideration is the idea of equity in educational access for all students. Every citizen in a democracy should be well-educated in order for the society to function well. So how do we ensure that all students have access to an appropriate education and an equitable opportunity to be successful?

That discussion plays out in many of the various state initiatives for allocation of dollars, including vouchers for attendance at private schools. Equity in education means more than merely dollars expended. The issues are complicated, and include availability of transportation, support from local districts for special needs, goals and objectives for different programs, and so on. Additionally, the demographics in the metropolitan area are changing and those changes affect what we do and how many students there are to be educated, where these students



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live, and what their needs are.

These issues are complex and interconnected. For example, some states provide resources at non-public schools such as transportation and books; other states do not. Some states provide a per-student allotment to non-public schools; other so not.

Importantly, parents who opt for non-public education for their children are still paying taxes to support the public system and that raises the question of what if anything, their children should receive from the state. No one seems to have found the perfect solution or right relationship of public funding and non-public schools. Finding that balance where equity and accessibility coexist while maintaining the public/non-public school choice in education remains a challenge when resources are limited.

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