The Lexington School
Pinpoints

"Your Mission, should you choose to accept it..."

THE STORY BEHIND THE TLS MISSION SKILLS ASSESSMENT

THE LEXINGTON SCHOOL, founded as the leader in academic excellence in the Bluegrass, continues as a leader in national education.

Furthering the 1959 long-range vision of **Josephine Abercrombie (H'00)**, TLS is one of 18 preschool-through-eighth/ninth-grade schools that has combined to create the prototypal non-cognitive skills test, now taken by over 17,000 middle school students at 70 of the most prominent schools in the United States. In affiliation with Educational Testing Services (ETS) and Independent School Data Exchange (INDEX), TLS is at the forefront of the Mission Skills Assessment (MSA), scientific research measuring six character strengths: teamwork, creativity, ethics, resilience, curiosity, and time management. Decades of research show what teachers and parents have long observed – that non-cognitive skills are often more important than high cognitive scores. In fact, these six character traits are strong indicators of academic success and lifelong success.



Melanie Mauer Photography

In 2009, Head of School Chuck Baldecchi was one of five founding members of the nascent MSA steering committee who considered a variety of testing firms to measure non-cognitive attributes. In a counterintuitive move, the committee selected ETS for the street credibility of their highly cognitive SAT, SSAT, PSAT, and TOEFL, among many other respected tests. ETS had developed non-cognitive tests for the U.S. Army for 18- to 25-year-olds, but never for middle school students. The Lexington School and fellow benchmark schools who were supplying the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade boys and girls, contracted with ETS to create the test. No individual student scores were given. The aim was improvement of the school itself, not improvement of the individual student. The six character strengths were identified because they were mentioned in 75% of the mission statements of the 18 partnering schools.

> Our school is an industry leader, as students throughout the U.S. are now taking our test.
>
> *Chuck Baldecchi*

Mr. Baldecchi emphasizes that the concept of Mission Skills is not a trend. It is age-old, harking back to the tutelage of Socrates, and TLS faculty members have been teaching these character strengths since 1959. The school's Mission Statement declares: *The mission of The Lexington School is to provide an education of the highest quality to students in preschool through middle school. In a structured, nurturing environment, The Lexington School seeks to instill integrity, a lifelong enthusiasm for learning, and a strong work ethic.*

Mr. Baldecchi also believes that an integral part of the foundation of Mission Skills is TLS's Philosophy Statement:

Because we are a nurturing environment, children feel confident.

When children are confident, they will take risks.

Because risk taking is inherent in learning, the possibility of failure exists.

When a nurturing community exists, challenges lead to growth.

Our success is defined when our students have the life skills to make wise choices and overcome obstacles.

MSA is a natural extension of The Lexington School's core beliefs. What is new, and what is game-changing, is that because of TLS's leadership, Mission Skills Assessment is now possible.

Other researchers and more recent tests have followed TLS's specific template, which draws on four years of solid data. Teachers in all four divisions of TLS (Preschool, Lower School, Middle School, and The Learning Center) are now designing their classrooms to assess their students on these critical skills. As Mr. Baldecchi notes, "We may not give a letter grade for teamwork or ethics, but these traits are taken into account. The straight-A valedictorian might not be as successful in the workplace as the creative student who shows resilience, curiosity, and good time



Melanie Mauer Photography



management skills. There will be increased emphasis on these important non-cognitive skills."

"What shapes these conversations is the data," Mr. Baldecchi explains. "Take time management as an example. We have learned that a student's being in the bottom two quintiles, understandably, is poor. Being in the third quintile, though, shows a dramatic change in a student's academic performance. Interestingly, there is little academic performance gained from the third to the first quintile in time management. Again, understandably, the facts show that a student with a strong score in resilience is a happier student than one who achieves less robust scores on that trait. There is a strong correlation. Our teachers are able to adjust their methods of instruction because of our research. We are using our data to change the way we teach."

In closing, Mr. Baldecchi says, "I am tremendously proud of our faculty. We are in the second year of our three-year period of faculty's assessing their own curricula. TLS teachers are on the cutting edge. Continuing Ms. Abercrombie's long-ago dream, which is as vital today as it was more than 50 years ago, our teachers are still able to provide robust, age-appropriate curriculum that is both vertically and horizontally aligned. Our school is an industry leader, as students throughout the United States are now taking our test. The Lexington School has a national reputation as a leader in teaching and in assessing these essential non-cognitive skills."

MISSION CONTROL

"How do I know the test is valid?"
"What is the science behind it?"
"How can those traits possibly be measured?"

THESE ARE ALL NATURAL QUESTIONS for parents, teachers, and even some students to ask about The Lexington School's Mission Skills Assessment.

Richard D. Roberts, Ph.D., has the answers. That's because Roberts, the managing principal research scientist in the Center for Academic and Workforce Readiness and Success at the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, New Jersey, wrote the book on the subject. Not just one, either.



Roberts is author of a dozen books and over 150 articles or chapters on non-cognitive factors. His main areas of specialization are psychological and educational assessment, with specific emphasis on developing and researching innovative, new items for measuring cognitive and non-cognitive factors. A former tenured professor at the University of Sydney, in Australia, Dr. Roberts chose, instead, to give up that academic security in order to improve the education system as a whole. Refreshingly humble, the peripatetic Dr. Roberts emphasizes he is, "one person in a very, very large team. I am fortunate to work with brilliant people."

Standing beside the check-in counter of the Philadelphia airport before heading to Washington, DC, to chair a committee for a federal government contract that must of necessity be kept confidential, Dr. Roberts gives background in great and enthusiastic detail on TLS's Mission Skills Assessment.

Regarding schools' mission statements, Dr. Roberts asks, "How much time and attention are we spending to ensure we adhere to those mission statements? Are we following through with our statements? Now that we can measure these vitally important non-cognitive traits, teachers can confirm they are teaching them. Mission Skills Assessment has a strong effect. It is important for the next level. If you don't think about these skills, you're not giving the future a fair shake."

(Continued on page 5)

MAN ON A MISSION


Melanie Mauer Photography

Chuck Baldecchi heartily lauds the comprehensive work of Jaime Lassman, Director of Studies, whose responsibilities include the incorporation of Mission Skills Assessment into The Lexington School curriculum from Preschool through eighth grade. Mr. Baldecchi affirms, "Jaime already did a great job when he taught third grade for us. He promoted the six Mission Skills Assessment character strengths [teamwork, creativity, ethics, resilience, curiosity, and time management] naturally in his classroom."

Now *all* TLS classrooms benefit from Mr. Lassman's deft and instinctive inclusion of opportunities to incorporate the Mission Skills traits. As he assists a teacher in building her curriculum, he emphasizes that TLS teachers have been encouraging MSA skills since 1959, when the school was founded, pointing out, "All of our faculty – and good teachers everywhere – have been doing this for years, for decades, but now we are being more purposeful. If you talk to expert teachers, teachers who have taught for 30 years or more, they have really always included Mission Skills, though not formally. Great schools have been doing this for hundreds of years."

> All of our faculty – and good teachers everywhere – have been doing this for years … but now we are becoming more purposeful.
>
> *Jaime Lassman*

Because of Mr. Lassman's schoolwide efforts, emphasis on character strengths has gone from unwritten to written, into the curriculum. Whereas in the past when we have seized upon impromptu teachable moments, we now create opportunities and are intentional in ensuring we are not missing instruction of the six measurable skills. Mr. Lassman likens teachers assessing the character traits to soccer coaches continuously assessing their players' particular skill levels – coaching in the classroom – seeing which athletes need specific coaching, who can kick with the right foot and who with the left.

All classes – music, art, library, and PE, as well as core curricular subjects – and all grade levels are active in teaching and assessing character traits from the Mission Skills Assessment. Mr. Lassman enjoys carving out time and space in the curriculum for each of the six traits, though he quickly reminds that this is not a large shift in classroom procedure. Spontaneous discussions of ethics in an election year, for instance, are natural learning opportunities. Civics classes have lively conversations about what it means to be a leader. Of course, these unplanned discussions still occur in the unwritten curriculum as well.

Teachers turn to Mr. Lassman if they need assistance. Some have sought various strategies to include the six skills, while others have blended MSA into their classroom on their own, often calling in Mr. Lassman to pair technology with assessment or instruction. In revisiting lower school math instruction, an assessment designed for first graders to utilize iPads in order to record math lessons for each other becomes a lesson in time management. Students use chronographs to measure how many minutes a specific task takes. What begins as a technology lesson, actually, easily unfolds as solid instruction in time management.



Mr. Lassman advises that MSA is not intended to measure or rank individual students' character traits. He reaches back to the soccer field once again, where coaches determine the players' proficiency levels so they can coach them effectively. Indoors or outside, for all ages of TLS students, and for their teachers, Jaime Lassman has made it his mission to promote assessment of teamwork, creativity, ethics, resilience, curiosity, and time management.

MISSION CONTROL *(Continued from Page 3)*

TLS's MSA benefits from decades of rich and varied research. Roberts endorses the work of James Heckman, Ph.D., his colleague, a 2000 Nobel laureate who advances the theory that strong non-cognitive traits predict not just academic grades, but lifelong success – from whether a student will remain in school, to her accomplishments in the work place, to her choices regarding a healthy lifestyle.

> If you don't think about these skills, you're not giving the future a fair shake.
>
> *Richard D. Roberts, Ph.D.*

"As we were building MSA," Dr. Roberts reflects, "we were testing real kids – 14,000 to 15,000 of them. Chuck Baldecchi was on that initial task force, and I worked hand-in-glove with him and with the other principal practitioners. We have the specific data to support the testing, not just in one lab, but all over the world."

Giving background to the validity of the test, Dr. Roberts explains, "If you look at psychology, you quickly see the importance of triangulation. We continue to rely on self-assessment; it still provides valuable information, but it cannot be the only factor. You say you are a great time manager, when, in fact, you might be really bad at that. We also rely on those important teacher assessments; TLS teachers know their students well. They know the ones who regularly display strong MSA skills, and they know the ones who need a bit of assistance in mastering some of the six character traits. Verifiable biographical data is the third leg of ensuring the test's validity: How many times you were late to class; did you attend each one of your math classes last year? We use all three of these indicators – self assessment, teacher assessments, and verifiable bio data – for comprehensive and provable results."

As The Lexington School is in the vanguard of this groundswell of non-cognitive testing, Dr. Richard Roberts, too, is at the forefront of non-cognitive testing, with his inexhaustible research into emotional intelligence, aging, wind engineering, and human chronotype (morningness and eveningness), just to name a few of the subjects that fascinate this fascinating gentleman, who is a key player in TLS's successful Mission Skills Assessment.

TEAMWORK

MSA Skills = Pre-K 101

"MISSION SKILLS ASSESSMENT is who we are!" Prekindergarten teacher Kelly Mitchell exclaims. "Those skills in a nutshell are what we are all about. They are the crux of our program."

The six character strengths – teamwork, creativity, ethics, resilience, curiosity, and time management – are taught every day in Prekindergarten at The Lexington School.

The prekindergarten team, consisting of Kelly Mitchell, Sherry Cline, Heather Espinoza, and Shelly Rogers, thinks about teamwork in the careful design of their classrooms before students arrive on the first day of school. As Mrs. Mitchell emphasizes, "We see ourselves as facilitators of teamwork throughout our entire day. We model teamwork through our own team-teaching approach." Their welcoming and engaging rooms are organized into specific areas of play where teamwork is not only encouraged, but is a necessity.

This morning, three students are busily engaged in the block area, working together to create a structure using ten blocks – not nine blocks, not eleven – as per their teachers' instruction. These four-year-olds are working together; they are demonstrating give-and-take; they are finding their own solutions; they are learning teamwork to help them complete their shared project.

Across the room in the dramatic play area are two "cell phones." Four students are figuring out together how each can use a phone. They are displaying the best of teamwork as they, themselves, decide who will make the first call, how long it will be, who will go next, and what happens when another friend joins the group unexpectedly. They work out as a team how to cooperate, to negotiate, and to show respect for the feelings of others.

The teachers create opportunities for their students to learn teamwork through strategic and purposeful pairings. They often match a talker with a non-talker, a girl with a boy, or a child who doesn't naturally gravitate toward a particular classmate with that classmate. Specific outcome-based activities such as St. Patrick's Day leprechaun traps are integrated into project-work curriculum to provide continued opportunities to learn the vital importance of teamwork.

The prekindergarten teachers are ever focused in their daily emphasis of each of the six Mission Skills Assessment character strengths. Every Lexington School Prekindergartner benefits from the experienced and capable prekindergarten team of teachers.







Team TLS

TEAMWORK IS HIGHLIGHTED in the playbook among student-athletes and coaches on The Lexington School's Webb Field. Coach Joe Conley, middle school Spanish teacher who reinstituted the Colts football program in 2010, works closely on and off the field with Coaches Chad Pennington and Anthany Beatty Jr., using the six Mission Skills Assessment character strengths as the football program's cornerstone.

Teamwork has always been important to Chad Pennington. Son of a high school football coach, a three-sport varsity high school athlete, dominant collegiate quarterback, and celebrated National Football League quarterback for 11 years, Coach Pennington knows that teamwork is crucial to success on the playing field, in school, and in life. As he states it, "I am a strong believer in using teamsmanship in the athletic arena to create a well rounded experience at TLS."

Tony Beatty, football standout through high school and into college and a six-year high school and middle school coach, knows firsthand, too, the necessity of being a strong team player. Referring often to Mission Skills Attributes, he encourages and expects the players to demonstrate respect for others' feelings, to listen well, to adapt effectively to different group situations, to know when and how to include others, and to find solutions during inevitable conflicts. High expectations to be sure, but attainable goals at TLS.

Coach Pennington and his wife, Robin, have the makings of their own strong TLS team at home with **Cole '18**, **Luke '20**, and **Gage '23**. Coach Beatty and his wife, Stephanie, have a house full of football enthusiasts, as well, with daughters **Kennedy '18**, **Peyton '22**, and Brandy.



From the NFL to TLS, Coach Pennington emphasizes, "Each individual's commitment is imperative so the whole team can perform at its highest level. We are not just a group of people; we are a team. Players must encourage each other. Each person needs to say, 'I must give everything I have as an individual to my teammates.' They need to be willing to make sacrifices for the team."

Accordingly, Coach Beatty stresses, "Teamwork is the epitome of showing your care for another person. It involves your being selfless. The quarterback, running backs, and wide receivers get lots of limelight with flashy plays that everybody sees. In football, because it takes all 11 guys though, everybody has a specific duty. If one person doesn't perform, his team cannot be successful overall. Somebody else has to pick up his responsibility."

Thinking back to his childhood, Coach Pennington points out that he was reared to believe, "Whatever I pursue – education, athletics, whatever the challenge is – I give it 100%." He grew up in a home, like that of Coach Conley and Coach Beatty and other TLS families, where education was imperative. A graduate of the Webb School, an independent school in Knoxville, Coach Pennington understands and deeply appreciates the strength of independent schools. He learned early on it was important to compete strongly, not just in the athletic arena, but in the classroom as well, becoming a Rhodes Scholar finalist.

From the 50-yard line, Coach Beatty emphasizes, "There are a lot of moving parts to a football program, and my fellow coaches and I work together as a team." The team of TLS Coaches Conley, Pennington, and Beatty promotes teamwork as a way of life. In and out of the huddle, self-sacrifice and selflessness for the team become part of the action each afternoon on TLS's Webb Field.



The Learning Center: Learning Creatively

CREATIVITY RUNS RAMPANT in Anna Walsh's Learning Center classroom. Her third graders have a tremendous amount of natural curiosity, of course, and Mrs. Walsh capitalizes on this every day. She builds creativity into her curriculum, ensuring opportunity for growth in each of the six Mission Skills Assessment character strengths.

An assignment popular with her students is The Pocket Book. As the double entendre suggests, young authors write a booklet about various containers evident in everyday life, what holds what. "A sock is a pocket for your toes," is only the beginning. It is not unusual for illustrated, often rhyming, books to be five or more pages, offering the occasion to initiate out-of-the-box thinking and to explore new ideas about old thoughts.





The Landform Research project, a hit last year, was a creation of Learning Center Instructional Specialist Maggie Clement. It is back again, but with a new twist from Mrs. Walsh – including creativity throughout every step. Three-dimensional landforms take many shapes as they are assembled by the bodies of the students themselves. Though the idea is new to them, groups of three to four students think creatively to fashion canyons, valleys, plains, and mountains … out of themselves. Canyons involve students standing to represent tall canyon walls. Sitting while others stand illustrates the depth of the valley. Plains call for students to lie side by side in a line, while hands raised high into the sky illustrate mountains. Creativity from the core.

Moving to another type of three-dimensional landform, Mrs. Walsh explains the salt dough map, a hands-on geography lesson that is the essence of opportunity for creativity to flourish.

Far from the stirring, mixing, and pouring students have done at home in the kitchen, this exercise results in elaborate, free-form countries or a meticulously crafted island in the shape of a rabbit. Some regions highlight a volcano or a waterfall, some showcase a cave or a lake, still others feature a sprawling town situated next to a body of water.

Promoting creativity comes as naturally to Mrs. Walsh as creativity, itself, comes naturally to her students.



CREATIVITY

Showcase for Creativity

CREATIVITY DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN in art class. One of the six Mission Skills Assessment character strengths, creativity shows itself in each of the classrooms and each of the hallways at The Lexington School. Rather than giving a topic, the third grade teaching team of Mona Azeem, Joni Calkins, and Tracy Young decided to issue their students a challenge, to explore. As Mrs. Young explains, "Our challenge was for them to create a museum that other classes, parents, and friends could visit."

Rising enthusiastically and boldly to the challenge, as the three teachers knew they would, the third graders embraced the idea with all the creativity they could muster. What does a museum look like? What kind of museum will it be? How will we make our displays? How many people will visit our museum?

Students were given the freedom to choose their own topic, inspiring yet more creativity and encouraging success since they felt ownership of the project. The class resource book, *If You Lived in Colonial Times*, provided the springboard, and The Lexington School's Colonial Life Museum was founded.



As a group and individually, the third graders generated a class full of ideas and explored new thoughts with an eagerness that impressed even their teachers. Creativity was in full swing.

Mrs. Young observes, "Creativity flourishes with having background knowledge from research." The students had to propose at least one topic to study; some came up with as many as eight. They divided themselves into groups of two or three or four, based on subject interest. Large, tri-fold boards provided excellent and impressive display areas, as students organized their material. The history of Colonial dyes, accompanied by fruits and berries to dye cloth, was a popular exhibit, as was the diorama on Colonial schools and games. Nearby, the presentation of various food items was mouthwatering and showed thorough student research to understand and explain the gathering, cooking, and enjoyment of Colonial cuisine. Appropriate for horse-loving Kentucky, a Colonial Williamsburg blacksmith was included via iPad video. The Lexington School's Colonial Life Museum quickly blossomed as a grand showcase for creativity.

The gala opening was the day before Thanksgiving break, and, like any popular museum, and especially a museum with free admission, the crowd was large. Students and teachers from each grade level, TLS staff, parents, grandparents, and friends strolled throughout and explored all three classrooms and the Third Grade Commons. Third graders acted as interpreters of the three-dimensional and interactive exhibits they had constructed, teaching Museum visitors the various aspects of Colonial life.

The third grade creators of the Colonial Life Museum felt great satisfaction with their overwhelming success as they were congratulated by the Museum patrons – patrons of the art of creativity.

ETHICS

Ethics in Kindergarten? You bet.

TEACHERS IN ALL FOUR DIVISIONS of The Lexington School know the vital importance of the six Mission Skills Assessment character strengths. Kindergarten teacher Tracy Hetman has always included role play in her class's daily activities, stressing the right way and the wrong way to act or react in a situation. It comes naturally, then, for her to continue incorporating ethics in her curriculum.

Mrs. Hetman and her class discuss how to treat a friend, how not to exclude people from a group, and how to be honest when mistakes are made. She notes, "Most of the time, they are honest in Kindergarten."

Mrs. Hetman points out that opportunities abound to promote ethics with this age group. Math and language games, where there are winners and losers, offer occasions to discuss as a group and one-on-one the importance of being thoughtful and gracious no matter the outcome of the game. Her students shake hands when the game is over, both when they win and lose.

The Peace Circle has proven to be an important part of learning to treat others with respect, sensitivity, and fairness. During circle time, once a month, Kindergartners pass around a stuffed animal. The child holding the stuffed animal is the only one permitted to talk. He gives a compliment to the person sitting next to him and passes the animal to her, who, in turn, compliments the next person. The stuffed animal continues to be passed around the circle until everyone has had a turn. The praise cannot be about clothing, but, instead, accentuates something the classmate did that was thoughtful: "You played with me on the playground," or "You helped me tie my shoe." "Thank you" and "You're welcome" are learned as appropriate – and natural – responses.

The *Kindness Book* continues Mrs. Hetman's purposeful promotion of ethics teaching. A spiral notebook, this is the place where student names are written when someone does a kind act. Those who "got the broom when I spilled the Cheerios" and "helped me zip my coat before we went to the playground" are listed for all to see and appreciate.

In her daily lessons, Mrs. Hetman includes ethics and each of the six Mission Skills Assessment character strengths. She could write an additional chapter in Robert Fulghum's *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.*









Ethics and Ethos: Life Lessons in Literature Class

WHAT SIXTH GRADER is not fascinated by Greek Mythology? Larger-than-life heroes, stealing fire from the gods and giving it to humanity … from Mount Olympus to Hades, and all in between?

Becky Johnson, middle school English teacher, brings the ancients to the present.

Ethical discussions and debates abound in Mrs. Johnson's class, as she includes the six Mission Skills Assessment character strengths in her core curriculum. Because she has been doing this her entire 14 years of teaching, well before the advent of MSA, her enthusiasm for The Lexington School's leadership in assessing and measuring these critical character strengths is only natural.

For their Greek Myth project, students research and come to know the grand stories of the ancients: King Midas and his golden touch, warning the dangers of greed; Persephone, goddess of the underworld and also of Spring's bounty; Pandora, opening her jar, releasing the evils of humanity; Daedalus's son Icarus, flying too close to the sun, melting his wax and feather wings; Narcissus and his deadly vanity; Apollo's son, Phaethon, losing control of the chariot and being struck by Zeus's thunderbolt. Captivating stories all, timeless inspiration for discourse and deliberation.

Mrs. Johnson points out, "Literature is an obvious place to teach ethics, conundrums, and choices to be made. Myths are really how-to-behave stories." With influence from the Greeks, and in accordance with the Mission Skills Assessment character traits, Mrs. Johnson's sixth graders discuss how they should make decisions and take actions as a member of a group. They weigh whether choices are better for the individual or for the entire group. They discuss the importance of treating people with respect, sensitivity, and fairness. They learn to demonstrate honesty and trust.

In small groups, the students write their own legends, which must reference three sources and include ten vocabulary words. Writing in an organized and understandable manner, they must present the meaning or lesson of their myth, double-checking throughout that there are no errors to detract from the reader's understanding.

Class presentations that follow are either live acting or technology-based. Parameters are strict, giving good direction for successful current day myths. Students must ensure the myth is presented in an engaging and entertaining way, while giving a clear and accurate version of the legend. As in the assignment's written portion, ten vocabulary words must be included, and, of course, the myth's ultimate meaning or life lesson must be clearly presented.

Mrs. Johnson is careful to include curriculum opportunities for her students to ponder ethical behavior. The sixth graders continue their in-depth discussions with the study of the Newbery Medal winner, *The Midwife's Apprentice.* Her questions from that book's culminating project challenge readers to ponder, "Is it more beneficial to make decisions and take action based on personal needs, or should one consider the needs of others first? How does the protagonist, Alyce, demonstrate that people should be treated with respect, sensitivity, and fairness?" Students also must answer, "How did religious belief and superstition influence behavior in the Middle Ages? How do you think this has changed or remained the same for modern society?"

It is no myth that Mrs. Johnson's students have the timeless opportunity to learn ethics in language arts class.





The Resilience of Mrs. Childers' Children

JANE CHILDERS, Director of The Learning Center, delights when her "children" excel. Because of the strong professional background of The Learning Center's teachers and the individualized attention the student-teacher ratio of four-to-one provide, her children excel daily. It is often not easy for them though. Resilience is a powerful part of their developing character.

For children with language-based learning differences, the curriculum is built upon the respected and widely used Orton-Gillingham method of instruction. Mrs. Childers and her 11 instructional specialists embrace the six Mission Skills Assessment strengths. Each one plays an influential role in the organization of The Learning Center's rooms. Mrs. Childers endorses the scientific data from the non-cognitive skills test that TLS and 17 companion preschool-through-eighth/ninth-grade schools combined to create. She upholds the test results that show non-cognitive skills are often more important than high cognitive scores.

Of her students, Mrs. Childers says, "Resilience is part of their nature. It's not a difficult skill to teach them. In many instances, they've already figured it out on their own. Our students have come up against academic challenges for most of their lives, and they don't let failure get them down. They are very good at figuring out if they can't do it one way, they'll do it another." She goes on to explain that some of her children, before they began at TLS, showed an inordinate amount of resilience just going to school each morning; school was not a pleasant place for them. In a larger classroom, the fear of failing in front of their peers often kept them from attempting a task: "In the small groups we have in The Learning Center," she continues, "students are not afraid to step up and give learning a try again and again. Their resilience is encouraged and celebrated. Small groups are a key to building their confidence."



As Mrs. Childers has said since The Learning Center was founded in 2010, "By giving students the strategies and confidence to appreciate their unique talents, the Center will empower them to contribute to our world in extraordinary ways." One of the areas in which their unique talents – and their resilience – shine is the Invention Convention. The Convention is the culminating event of a heralded project that spans several weeks in the second half of the year. With much thought and detail, students research inventors, their inventions, and the inventing process.

Working in teams of two they envision, design, and eventually create their own, carefully crafted inventions. Moving the idea from paper and pencil to a real-life prototype can be riddled with frustration and failure. Teachers expect and anticipate this to occur and seize the opportunities to teach resilience. When failure occurs, teachers offer just enough guidance and feedback to encourage students to return to the drawing board and problem-solve their predicament. By Convention day, all teams have an invention to present. Are they what the team originally designed? Most likely not. They are the result of a process of trying, overcoming a failure, and trying again. The intended result is not the product, but the process of learning to be resilient. In the words of Thomas Edison, "The most certain way to succeed is to try just one more time."

The nurturing environment of The Learning Center is enhanced by the intentional inclusion of the six Mission Skills Assessment character strengths, supported by the testing data originated by TLS and partnering schools. It's no wonder that Mrs. Childers' children excel.

RESILIENCE

La Résilience en Action

"YOU HAVE TO HAVE COURAGE to speak out in a foreign language and open yourself up to making mistakes. It is then that resilience can be taught. The second a student makes a mistake in conversation or on the board and I have to correct him, resilience comes into play. It is an underlying part of our basic class structure." Sara Hinds, middle school French teacher, knows languages lend themselves to encouraging students to be resilient. She has organized her curriculum specifically to include, promote, and assess the six Mission Skills Assessment strengths.

Opportunities for assessing resilience in French class present themselves often in the course of informal evaluations on oral examinations or through basic classroom exercises. During a recent lesson with complicated verb forms, Madame Hinds applauds a student who recognizes her own mistake and works independently to self-correct. After experiencing failure the first time, and the second time, the student tries again, determined to finish what she began. She looks at it a different way, and perseveres before teacher or peer intervention becomes necessary. Though a difficult and trying situation, the student sees her setback as temporary. Madame Hinds observes the continued, diligent work, and emphasizes, "This is the essence of resilience in language."

A group of students resurrects a favorite project a class enjoyed five years ago, an eighth grade teaching project. Students take partners based on shared subject interest – the verb *avoir*, adjective agreement, expressions with *depuis* – and are responsible for teaching a review lesson for the entire 50-minute class. Students-turned-teachers incorporate detailed lesson plans, include activities that were not discussed in the text book, create their own homework exercises, and determine an engaging way to present the material … all in French. *Mais Oui.* One of their grades is on resilience.

Remembering Mr. Baldecchi's words, "… the facts show that a student with a strong score in resilience is a happier student than one who achieves less robust scores on that trait. There is a strong correlation. Our teachers are able to adjust their methods of instruction because of our research. We are using our data to change the way we teach."

The Lexington School knows that in any language, on any continent, *résilience* is an essential character strength for success in today's world.





Maria Montessori Would Be Proud

THE LEXINGTON SCHOOL'S MONTESSORI classroom is an inviting, thoughtfully planned home-away-from-home that encourages and celebrates the six Mission Skills Assessment character strengths, which are part of every hour of every day in this inspiring room. Kris Neese and Marti Thompson, experienced teachers with 36 years of Montessori instruction between them, know the vital importance of creating opportunities for children's natural – sometimes almost unbounded – curiosity to blossom.

It is immediately evident that the three- , four- , and five-year-olds have independence in this orderly room, independence to follow their inborn curiosity. Mrs. Thompson points out, "In Montessori, students get to look at their environment, to explore it on their own, and to feel comfortable in it. One thing, of many, I like is that they are curious about their own abilities and they are intrinsically attuned. This environment sets them up for success. I love it when a child looks at me and says, 'I did it!'"



In the "practical life environment," which bears strong resemblance to a kitchen, a young boy is fascinated by pouring sand through a funnel on his tray – curious why it makes "that sound" and why the pattern changes so quickly. Standing next to him, his friend wonders how much rice will fit into her bowl, as she ladles from the pot for her pretend lunch. With grand childhood imagination, he immediately says, "You could have vegetables with rice today." Overhearing them, a three-year-old declares, "This is Chinese food." Nearby, another student scoops coals for his fire, while five classmates laugh and pluck corn together. As Mrs. Neese reflects, "Not a one is aware that Maria Montessori said, 'Give them materials to explore. Put something in the environment and see what the child does with it. Put no restrictions on their exploring.' Our Montessori students are encouraged to follow their natural curiosity to go wherever their imagination takes them."

To promote that curiosity, new materials are introduced and the environment changes each month. Cultural studies, too, pique curiosity, as the class discovers and explores four continents a year. Animal families, magnets, and machines open new worlds for these inquiring minds. Squeals of enthusiasm accompany experiments with shadows, as both teachers know that experiments themselves promote further learning.

The monthly unit on artists and composers stimulates curiosity, as the class learns about the paintings of Vassily Kandinsky and Marcel Duchamp and the music of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Yo-Yo Ma. Mrs. Thompson remarks, "We want to spark their curiosity in art and music, which sets a broad base for culture. The artists and composers we study are not always American. We make it a point to include European, Asian, and African artists as well."

Kapla blocks are a visual manifestation of curiosity, as would-be architects, engineers, and designers both satisfy and challenge their curiosity about how tall their houses can get or how long their barns can stretch.

Montessori students at The Lexington School have the freedom to express their natural curiosity in the encouraging environment conceived by Maria Montessori and provided by Mrs. Neese and Mrs. Thompson.

CURIOSITY

"Curiouser and curiouser!" cried Alice (she was so much surprised, that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English). "Now I'm opening out like the largest telescope that ever was! Good-bye, feet!" – *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* by Lewis Carroll

ALICE WOULD HAVE BEEN right at home in Tom Novitsky's fifth grade science classroom. Everybody at The Lexington School knows which room "Ski's" is. It's the room with the Rube Goldberg roller coasters. It's the room where homemade heat keepers compete against each other. It's the room where rockets are assembled and chemical reactions launch them into space. It's the room where curiosity abounds.

Jaime Lassman, in his work to incorporate the six Mission Skills Assessment character strengths into The Lexington School curriculum, says, "Kids come to Ski excited about science. They come to him and say, *'We made up this really cool song using our science vocabulary terms. Can we sing it in class today?'* or… *'I can't wait for science class to start. What are we going to do today?'* They do this because he is a great teacher. He goes above and beyond and, consequently, his students go above and beyond. He knows where the conversation is going, but the students ask that next question, and the next, and *the next.* Kids are enthusiastic about trying new things and testing out their ideas, even if they fall a little short. They are thrilled to build a new project or explore a new idea, and he encourages them to share what they discover in his classroom. That's where curiosity is celebrated."

For his part, Mr. Novitsky expounds: *Have you ever wondered…? Did you see in the news last night…? Have you ever thought about what might happen if…?* He throws out probing questions as bait in the context of what the students are working on, and then they are hooked. They want to know the answers. Science becomes relevant to their daily lives as each mystery unfolds; with every exploding, color changing, bubbling reaction, science takes on new meaning. "So what makes the perfect soap bubble, and why do the colors change? And talk about gravity… What keeps us from falling out of a roller coaster when it goes upside down? Let's build one and find out!"

It's hard to keep up with Mr. Novitsky, in his thirtieth year of teaching science, his seventh at The Lexington School. He frequently peppers his classes with open-ended questions that stimulate curiosity. He gives wildly popular demonstrations that have loud noises, pungent smells, acrid tastes, sticky feelings, or beautiful sights – demonstrations that test and treat all five senses – every chance he can get, and then asks, "Can you explain what just happened? I can tell you the answer or you can figure it out for yourself. Which do you think will be more fun?" About his students – all of his students – he says with a smile and a nod, "They were *born* curious. That's why they stood up and climbed out of their cribs. I want to build on that natural curiosity so that each of my students understands and sees the world like a scientist. I am hopeful some of them will become one someday!"



A big, bright red Easy Button from Staples sits on the edge of Mr. Ski's desk. He knows students love tinkering and just can't keep their hands off of things. Naturally, he asks, "What's inside?" But he really means it. He wants them to tell him what's inside. So each person starts dismantling an Easy Button, or as he says, "completely tears it apart." Next they use a Dremel tool to cut access into the button's framework and insert bigger batteries. Now comes the best part; they solder and attach new circuitry that makes their own voices resonate from the button. "That was Easy!"…if you're a student in Mr. Novitsky's science class, that is!

It is no curiosity why Mr. Ski's students love science class.

TIME MGMT

Tempus Fugit

IT'S A FACT. TIME FLIES. We'd better learn how to manage it. Robin Crawford, instructional specialist at The Learning Center, knows the importance of managing time wisely. She also knows the importance of teaching and assessing all six of the Mission Skills Assessment character strengths. She is serious about incorporating time management into her core curriculum, realizing that it consists of much more than just turning in a math paper on time.

At the beginning of school, Mrs. Crawford goes over the schedule with a student, letting him know how the day will evolve so he can anticipate what's next and can plan accordingly. She describes the routine for daily lessons. She helps him understand the best time to get a drink of water is on the way to the specials class, not in the middle of English. She helps him prepare his mind and himself for the tasks at hand. Following pre-established procedures, maintaining good planning, and limiting distractions save time wasted in the classroom and in transitions between classrooms.

Mrs. Crawford and her Learning Center colleagues emphasize the necessity of organization, helping students to organize their school materials and to take steps to streamline their work. Homework trappers should have everything in its proper place. She advises a fifth grader: "If all your materials are in one place for the day, your papers are safe and there is no wasted time rummaging around." She encourages the self-monitoring skills of another student: "Look how much more you were able to accomplish today than you did yesterday. You showed great improvement on tallies for directing. You were able to stay focused." Promoting good habits of time management, she adds, "With the extra time you have saved, you can have fun with learning."

Mrs. Crawford advocates the value of goal setting, encouraging her students to set their own goals, noting, "They own it. It's more meaningful for them. I often ask, 'What do you need to work on?', 'What have we done to help you achieve your goal?'" She stresses creating good work habits for homework, tests, and independent study times in class. She notes, "If you start with the most difficult job first, when you're fresh, you are more successful." Continuing, she warns, "Don't spend too much time on one task. If you need to, go on to the next project and come back afterward. Scheduling short breaks for rejuvenation is important, as is setting goals: do all the math questions, then take a break, come back, and do the pages of reading. It's easy to shut down, and you don't want that. You want to complete your entire homework assignment."

A fourth grade social studies project demonstrates ways to organize time. A collage is to cover a map of Kentucky. In preparation, students are given time to browse magazines for pictures relating to Kentucky. Some students become enmired looking through the magazines, and at the end of the day their maps are still empty. An opportunity presents itself for a lesson in time management. The entire map must be covered. A student asks, "What should I do differently next time?"

With the guidance of the Mission Skills Assessment and the help of Mrs. Crawford and her fellow Learning Center instructors, students come to class better prepared to learn, pay attention, and resist distraction. They have a clearer focus on the work at hand, instead of procrastinating. They maintain a system to complete their work and prioritize their tasks.

It's a fact. Although time flies, TLS students are learning to manage theirs.





Time Is a Gift; Learning to Manage it Well Is an Art

THE LEXINGTON SCHOOL gives its students untold gifts every day. In collaboration with Jaime Lassman, TLS Director of Studies, first grade teacher Lisa Gumm-Gray incorporates time management lessons into math class, while continuing to integrate technology into her classroom. Using data from the nationwide test developed by TLS and its 17 companion preschool-through-eighth/ninth-grade schools, Mrs. Gumm-Gray promotes the six Mission Skills Assessment character strengths, and she is careful in her planning to include them in the first grade curriculum.

At the end of each math unit, after Mrs. Gumm-Gray has taught the skills, the students themselves teach the Everyday Math lesson, explaining to each other what they have learned. Their taking on the role of teaching is an extension of lessons learned. As Mrs. Gumm-Gray notes, "Being able to teach other students shows thorough understanding of the subject. It's one thing if you can do it on paper; it's quite another to be able to explain that knowledge to others." Divided into four groups of three, they hone their ability to understand numbers. This unit focuses on using manipulatives and a chart to learn 100s, 10s, and 1s; comparing numbers using greater than/less than/equal to; and learning to distinguish between odd and even numbers.

Each group is given a handheld, digital timer and is fully responsible for managing it with no teacher or peer assistance from another group. Mrs. Gumm-Gray explains the four-part exercise, Plan, Practice, Perform, and Present, which culminates in the use of iPads to make a movie. Time management steps to the forefront as Mrs. G-G informs that each "P" step lasts four minutes, which sounds like all morning to a first grader.

During the planning phase, the groups assign specific jobs. Who holds the timer and has the responsibility as the time manager? Who records the important data assimilated? Who reports "live" via the iPad? Students must also allow time to choose items needed to present the lesson. They must plan how to teach their lesson. This four-minute period teaches that discussion can easily take longer than time permits.



Four minutes for the practice stage gives time for Mrs. G-G to observe and assess, and also provides time for the mathematicians/time management learners to reflect and perfect. They determine precisely how to demonstrate their math skills and practice movie-making, pretending one person holds the camera/iPad.

The four-minute performance time allows the students to share what they have learned. The math lessons are a springboard for learning what will fit into an allotted amount of time and what will not.

The culmination of the lesson is the four-minute iPad movie, showing the understanding of not just mathematical tasks, but the understanding of time management as well. As a result of each group's effort, Mrs. G-G's class views four different movies with four completely different ways of teaching.

Mr. Lassman notes that, "Mrs. Gumm-Gray is taking time management and teaching how to build a system, rather than just assigning a deadline. She asked her class, 'How did it go? What took the longest? What did you learn?' They reflected as a group how they did."

Mrs. Gumm-Gray and Mr. Lassman agree it is natural to intertwine lessons of Everyday Math and time management. With teachers' incorporating the six MSA character strengths into the core curriculum, TLS students are given the gift of learning the constraints – as well as the luxury – of time, which will permeate their entire lives.

Special thanks to Melanie Mauer Photography (www.melaniemauer.com) for the wonderful images used in these pages, capturing Mission Skills Assessment at The Lexington School (as well as assorted beautiful photos sprinkled throughout every issue of Pinpoints).

Head *Lines*

NOTES FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Do we play it safe or do we take the plunge?

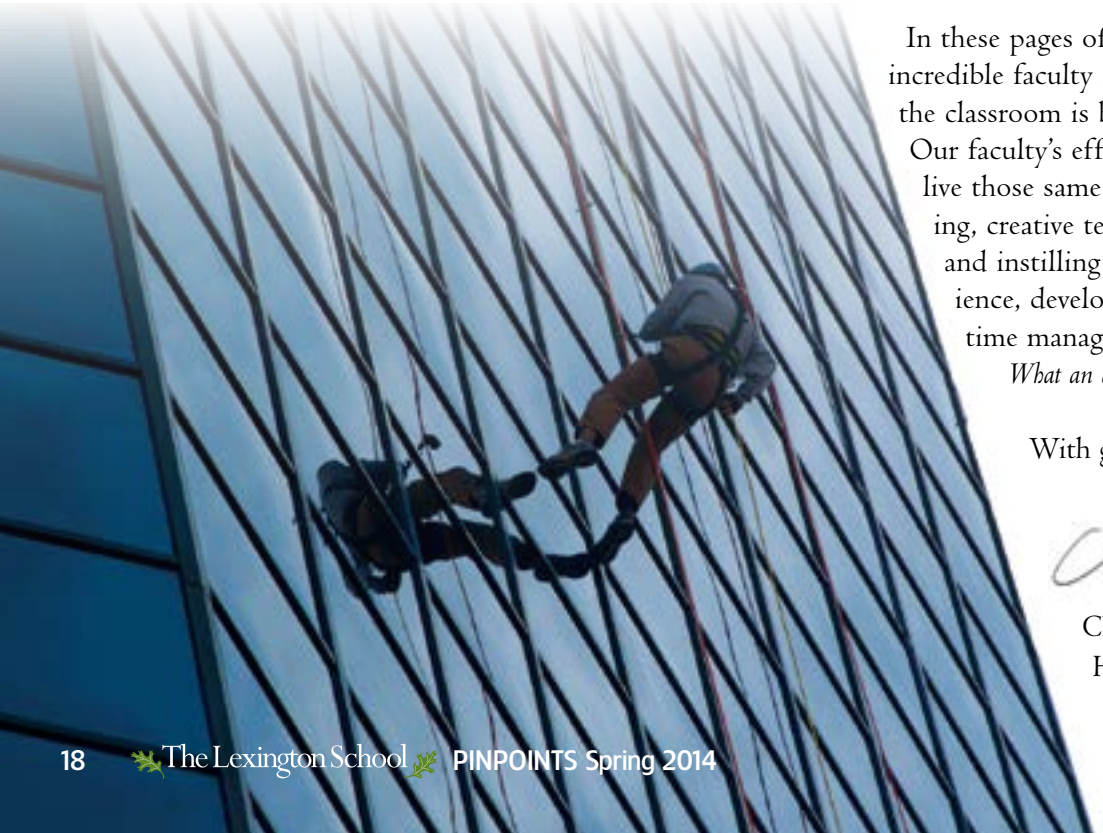
Five years ago The Lexington School asked an important question: Can we create a test to measure how effectively we teach our mission and philosophy? TLS was part of a pioneering group of 18 schools that partnered with Educational Testing Services (ETS) to create such a test. We were interested to see if something could measure Teamwork, Creativity, Ethics, Resilience, Curiosity, and Time Management. Yes, is the simple answer.

Our group of schools created what is known today as the Mission Skills Assessment, and it has grown from 18 schools to over 70 of the country's finest independent day schools. In the meantime, the national media has written numerous articles extolling the importance of "21st Century Skills," and readers have shown a voracious appetite for books like Paul Tough's *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character*.

When The Lexington School designed this new test, we created it not to measure the individual child, but rather to assist the school in effectively measuring the success in teaching its "hidden curriculum." The school has used the test to enhance the way we teach. The school and its faculty have always valued those six traits listed above, but now we can be more deliberate about how we teach them.



In a gripping personal demonstration of the six Mission Skills character strengths, TLS Head Chuck Baldecchi prepares to rappel the Lexington Financial Center as part of *Brave the Blue II*, a charity event sponsored by the Blue Grass Council of the Boy Scouts of America.



In these pages of *Pinpoints*, you will read about our incredible faculty and how what they are teaching in the classroom is being modeled around the country. Our faculty's effectiveness resides in its ability to live those same six traits as educators: team building, creative teaching, expecting ethical behavior and instilling a work ethic, demonstrating resilience, developing curious minds, and modeling time management.

What an exciting time to be at TLS!

With gratitude for a job I love,

Charles D. Baldecchi
Head of School

The Gift of Scholarship



The Bandoroff Family – **Conrad '07**, **Isabel '13**, Craig, Holly, and **Katherine '04**.

ASK ANY MEMBER of the Bandoroff Family and you'll be quick to hear of their deep love of The Lexington School. But after 20 years of being included in the TLS family directory, this year they arrived at a bittersweet crossroads: no Bandoroff is listed under the Bs in this year's Green Book.

But as one book closes, another opens. Turning loss into opportunity, the Bandoroffs have created the **Bandoroff Family Scholarship for Girls**, to pay all expenses for a female student entering sixth grade who demonstrates high academic promise as well as financial need. The scholarship covers all materials, fees, after school care, technology and uniform needs, and school trips for all three years of Middle School.

Mrs. Bandoroff, a past board of trustees member, and Mr. Bandoroff, currently on the board for a second term, know well the importance of the school's Anita Madden Bluegrass Boys Ranch Scholarship for a male student entering sixth grade. As Mrs. Bandoroff says, "For us, the ending of our time as active parents at TLS coincided with our thinking of the Madden Scholarship, and we wanted to offer a similar opportunity for a girl. Katherine, Conrad, and Isabel have said many times how valuable their TLS education is, and this scholarship will now help make that happen for another girl." Mr. Bandoroff adds, "Holly and I have tried to instill in our children the importance of education. The facts are clear that although an education doesn't guarantee success in today's world, a lack of education makes success much harder, if not impossible, to attain. We hope this scholarship will keep a gifted young girl on that path for future success. What better gift for the child, her family, and society in general?" Mr. Bandoroff continues, "We are blessed to have three kids come out of TLS. I have a profound belief that from the day Katherine, Conrad, and Isabel walked through the TLS door for the first time, the faculty and staff helped create the people they are."

A junior at Sewanee: The University of the South, Conrad emphasizes, "I'm very proud and grateful that we will be able to offer the Bandoroff Family Scholarship for Girls. The value and appreciation of a high quality education was instilled in us from a young age through both our parents and from TLS. To be able to give the gift of an education, especially to The Lexington School, is something we are all excited about. We love this school so much and can't wait to share our love for TLS with a special young lady."

After freshman classes at the Liberal Arts Academy at Henry Clay, Isabel reflects, "When I left TLS, I was well prepared academically. My best friends at TLS are still my best friends because it is such a close community. This scholarship will give another girl the great opportunity to have a similar experience."

Katherine, a cardiac intensive care unit nurse at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, closes by saying, "Nearing Isabel's graduation, our entire family was saddened that we would not be connected to TLS on a daily basis. Although this was hard for all of us, in the back of my head, I always felt my parents would find a way to stay connected and continue the gift of a wonderful education. This scholarship is the perfect opportunity. When my parents approached me about starting a scholarship, I did not hesitate one second. I am extremely proud of this opportunity. I was honored that my parents wanted to include Conrad, Isabel, and me in this scholarship instead of doing it themselves. We all have the same love and appreciation for The Lexington School, so there is no better way to pass on these feelings than providing others with the same experience. This is an excellent way to connect my family to TLS and the gift of education."

The Bandoroffs reinforce the fact that it doesn't take a listing in the Green Book to be part of the grand Lexington School family. The gift of a TLS education is the gift of a lifetime.

Pin Prints



Pajama Day is a time for fun in Mrs. Metze's Kindergarten class. From center, left, are: Isla Puckett, Mia Risco, Ruka Ito, Nathan Ziegler, Colin Hinds, Beckham Milburn, Ellie Hiler, and Taylor Riordan.



Will Croce proclaims in one of the fifth grade recycling skits, "Recycle: It's the right thing to do ... or else!"



With Coaches Jonathan Herrington and Jason Vires, the varsity girls team includes seventh and eighth graders: Tori McLaughlin, Alice Rodgerson, Kendall Sturgill, Emerson White, Olivia Baker, Alexis Pickett, Madalyn Given, Morgan Patton, Ruby Kate Gray, Angie Willcutt, and Ellie Phillips. Not pictured: Daisy Farish and Alex Rudder.



Mrs. Johnson's sixth graders, divided into teams, practice formation of compound and complex sentences in an innovative and competitive way.



Declaring success at the Lafayette Speech Tournament are sixth grader Nasim Mohammadzadeh, third in Storytelling; eighth grader Sahar Mohammadzadeh, first in Public Speaking; and the eighth grade team of Sam Perez and Ellie Webb, first in Duo Acting.



TLS Parental involvement is popular on both ends of the rope as Prekindergartners EJ Beatty, Paul Coppedge, and Cohen Carter learn the strength of the mountain climbing rope from Paul's dad, Mr. Coppedge, guest expert and worldwide alpinist.



Kindergartners enjoying the snowfall are: Maddy Warner, Miranda Bradner-Young, Kate Robbins, Audrey Bennett, Zachary Wieting, Frank Gooding, William Woodworth, Brayden Hazelbaker, and Sam Shapiro.



Fourth graders perform their grand finale of Kentucky Heritage Day, a 1 1/2-hour, multi-media musical celebrating each student's family heritage, directed by middle and lower school music teacher, Dr. David Cooper.



Winners of the 4th-8th grade Geography Bee: *Front Row* Zachary Langdon, John Sader, Faith Lyman, and Hanae Yoshida, the overall winner. *Back Row* Myles Winkley, Davant Latham, Trey Woody, Wick Hallos, Woods Freeman, and Michael Madden. The last question: "What island country in the Pacific Ocean includes the island of Samoa?" Hanae's winning answer, "Polynesia."



Learning Center fifth grader Carson Mitchell makes a fast break down the court against Christ the King.



Left First grader Alexander Crothers works on a candy house that would impress Hansel and Gretel (with help from Dad).
Right The Lower School Cheer Team, led by Ms. Merritt and Mrs. Blevins: Gigi Cornett, Leah Hale, Leah Keelen, Lucy Garcia, Maggie Pulliam, Savannah Merritt, Avery Sullivan, and Arden Stone.



Pin Prints



First graders Audrey Mauer, Amelia Ryan, and Cailyn Rogers make new friends and spread student sunshine at Lexington Country Place. (Melanie Mauer Photography)



Celebrating Chinese New Year in Mrs. Love's art room, Qibin Zeng and Yanqing Niu teach the Chinese art of calligraphy to Mrs. Deller's first grade class. Front Row Caroline Beiting, Ben Fallon, Eva Quinn, and Laura B Friesen. Back Row Cian Shah, Wade Johnson, Andrew Campbell, Donovan Stone, Olivia Watson, and Shailen Zimmerman. (Melanie Mauer Photography)



At Frankfort's Kentucky Youth Assembly, seventh grader from The Learning Center Ben Gillig sits at his House of Representatives desk at the Capitol. Ben authored and presented a bill proposing tax credits for energy efficient equipment to prevent overgrowth of harmful blue-green algae in Kentucky's ponds and small lakes.



Eighth graders Zach Coons and Philip Allison use each of their MSA skills – teamwork, creativity, ethics, resilience, curiosity, and time management – to design, complete, and present Science Fair Projects, culminating the winter term.



At the cooking intramural, third grader Samantha Harris and first graders Shailen Zimmerman and Wes Taylor pick up some culinary hints from Chef Ryan, making three kinds of cookies for a panel of judges.







Eli Scarr '91 *returns to school for a screening of his documentary* Back in the Wings: Freddie Dunn's Lexington. *After the presentation, Eli visited with current TLS students, including Ben Belin, Wick Hallos, Matthew Trawick, Makayla Brown, and Caleb Ervin.*

On Donuts with Dads morning, salutes go to Calvin Harvey, KinderKlasse, and his dad, Major John Harvey, Kentucky National Guardman, who knows the sweet things in life, having returned from Iraq three weeks before Calvin was born.

Is there a doctor in the house? During Spirit Week, Darrin Wald's seventh grade advisor group provides its own ER and OR physicians. Front Row *Nate Steiner, Trey Woody, Michael Duzyk, Gaelen Robinson, and Luke de Castro.* Back Row *Conner Schell, Mr. Wald, Matthew Bernard, Alex Irwin, Nicholas Johnson, and Sam Vaughan.*



Mathilde Longbottom, fifth grade, looks for a pass against Christ the King.



Serendipitously coinciding with the Sochi Olympics, Connor Harrison, Hart Hallos, and Isabela de Sousa present their Faberge Eggs, highlight of the Russian unit of seventh grade's history and art collaborative project. After studying Carl Faberge's significance to Czar Nicholas and wife Alexandra, each student selects a Faberge Egg as an archetype, learning the precision of delicate "gemstone" work.



Left *Fun and theater games are part of Dr. Bowling's drama class, as seventh graders Daisy Farish, Kendall Sturgill, and Angie Willcutt are rearranged into unusual positions in* Night at the Museum.

Right *Third grade library helpers enjoy December's annual library helper holiday party.* Clockwise from left *Michelle Ortiz, Uma Zimmerman, Olivia Kobak, Mimi DeRossett, Gigi Cornett, and Leah Keelen.*



Pin *Notes*

CLASS OF 1993



Allie Collier Barringer '93, husband Wes, and daughters Elizabeth, 5, and Caroline, 3, welcomed the newest addition to their family on February 7. Katherine Barringer (Kate) is the star of the show for her older sisters, who are enthusiastic baby helpers.

I look back on my days at TLS with such fondness. I remember with the most affection Mrs. Robin Jones, Mrs. Young, and, of course, the very sweet Mrs. Walker, who was always so kind, despite my lack of interest in math. Mrs. Walker always had a smile on her face. I do not really remember her ever being cross or irritated with us.

Mrs. Jones was always very popular with all of us because she was young and a fun teacher. She went on quite a few class trips with us as well. Looking back, I liked it that while she was fairly tough in the classroom (which I probably didn't appreciate at the time), she could also unwind and was lots of fun when it was appropriate.

I absolutely adored Mrs. Young, who was always smiling, goofy, and creative with us. I imagine most alumni remember her the same way. She had so much patience and I always looked forward to her drama class.

I am now 35 years old and think it is incredible that some of my closest friendships began 25 years ago. Enduring friendships seem to be a common theme amongst the alumni with whom I keep in touch. That, to me, has to be one of the most special things about TLS.



From the GooglePlex, **Ward Bullard '93** *(pictured with wife Becky, four-year-old Gracie, and Jack, six, visiting Hawaii)* writes that they are based in the Bay Area, in Menlo Park. For the past two and a half years, he has been working at Google, where he heads Sports Partnerships for Google+. He encourages any Lexington School travelers to let him know if they are out west; he gives a great tour of the GooglePlex.

Ward remembers the fun of his first TLS year, making lots of new friends in sixth grade: "When homeroom teacher Mr. Brown spoke, he had a way of word emphasis that left him open to … *humorous attempts at replication* – most of them falling well short of the original though. I'm very grateful to my time at TLS and the many great students and friends I made there."



Garrett Graddy-Lovelace '93 completed her doctorate in geography at UK in 2011, served as a visiting professor at Minnesota's Carleton College, and is an assistant professor of environmental and agricultural policy at American University's School of International Service in Washington, DC. Her husband, Paul, is finishing doctoral work in education policy, and they live with four-year-old daughter, Noura Hart *(pictured with Gemma Larkin, daughter of **Taylor Baker Larkin '93**)*, in their farmhouse in southern Maryland, outside Washington. She is quick to say, "We return to Kentucky as much as possible."



Last year, Garrett led a graduate seminar to Cuba to study agrarian politics, and she traveled this winter in Peru and Bolivia to conduct research for a book on agricultural biodiversity conservation, a gig for which she regularly reflects on TLS teachings: "Daily writing requires both creativity and diligence, as I was told and shown by a whole string of wonderful Language Arts teachers at TLS: they were right. Thank goodness Miss Bale, Mrs. Groves, and Ms. Kline sparked my nerdy love of books, while Ms. Stith, Mrs. Foster, and Mrs. Eames further cultivated this love of writing. I remain grateful!"



Deep in the Heart of Texas, life is happy and full for **Helen Van Clief Heard '93**: "Chase and I are busy in our twelfth year living in Austin. Our kids Ginny, five, and Charlie, three, keep us on our toes, and we split our time between them and our business, Howler Brothers. We've had a wild ride establishing this clothing company with two friends from UVA. After practicing law (me) and architecture (Chase) for about five years, we launched our company and have been running to keep up with it ever since … *kind of like the kids!*"

The Heards travel to Charlottesville often to see Helen's parents and **Danny '92**, Anna, and their children Daniel, George, and Claudia. Helen hopes to return to Lexington this Spring to visit **Allie Collier Barringer '93** and meet her third baby girl, Kate.



Erica Cohen Mash '93 keeps in close touch with her niece and nephew, **Abby Rubin '20** and **Seth Rubin '17**, seeing them whenever she comes in for Alumni Council meetings. When Seth told her he was preparing for his fifth grade show, it sounded like *déjà vu*: "Did I hear that right? It made me think of ***our*** fifth grade show."

Here's how she remembers it: "The Noderers put on a spectacular show. It was so much fun getting my 'big break' on the main stage of the NEW Lexington School Theatre. I felt I was famous when I walked back stage to our dressing room with the big mirrors surrounded by lights. I am sure our show was exactly how I remember it … *worthy of a Tony!*"

Erica says her TLS music experiences remain with her: "At my last job in Chicago, I worked at a retirement community and started the Glee Club. I was providing music therapy to the residents of the community just like Mrs. Anderson's music classes and the Noderers' big show provided me. Music makes everyone happy; I was so lucky to have those experiences at TLS."

From Lexington, where she lives with her husband Jeremy Mash, Erica closes by saying, "The Lexington School was a special and magical experience for me. I was so lucky to be afforded so many great experiences along with a fabulous education. The art, music, and theatre classes and programs at TLS were magnificent."

CELEBRATION

outside the lines

At TLS, coloring ***inside*** the lines is not

a favorite subject. Whether it's embracing new learning styles through The Learning Center, pushing students and teachers beyond their comfort zones as they explore and develop Mission Skills, or celebrating students' self-expression through the fine arts, creative writing, and extracurricular activities, The Lexington School encourages students to think, live, and color their world ***Outside the Lines***. And so it is with CELEBRATION '14.

Combining the edginess of the art world with the traditional beauty of circa-1795 Scarlet Gate, Tracie and Richard Sturgill, parents of **Kendall '15,** promise May 9 will be "an artsy, modern, edgy, contemporary evening." The juxtaposition of the event and its picturesque surroundings is itself, "Outside the Lines" and will transform the grounds of Scarlet Gate once again as celebrants gather for an evening of dinner, dancing, and lively bidding.



2014 Auction Items Include

Jackson Hole Ski Trip for Two

Enjoy five nights at the beautiful Wort Hotel in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. This package includes lift tickets and rentals, a $500 credit for travel, dinners and lunches at some of Jackson Hole's finest restaurants, and a couples spa visit to The Rusty Parrot Lodge, plus some stylish ski apparel.

Whiskey Barrel

Spend an afternoon at Jim Beam Distillery and select your very own barrel of Knob Creek Bourbon (160-180 bottles!). Taste, select, and help bottle your own Single Barrel Collection. Bottles will be personalized with your name or company name.

Holiday Party at the Apiary

Join your friends for the hottest holiday party of 2014 — and a first peek at the city's newest culinary hotspot! Join us on Saturday, Dec. 13, for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at The Apiary! *$150/per person.*

MAKE YOUR PLANS NOW

www.TLSCELEBRATION.com

outside the lines



The sun shines on **Adrian Mendiondo '93**, his wife Whitney, and daughters Anna Claire, left, and Lillian. Illustrating that TLS friendships are made to last, Adrian points out that he is a partner at Kinkead & Stilz, where he works with **Coley Stilz '93**, his best friend since seventh grade at TLS. "Life is good," says Adrian!



Jay Philpott '93 is the Director of Advancement at St. George's Independent School in Memphis, TN, where he's responsible for the operating budget, and growing endowment funds.

Jay and his wife, Emily, met at St. George's, where she teaches AP World History and AP Psychology. To make it a complete family affair, their children, Mary Russell, six, a Kindergartner, and James, four in March, in Pre-K, are also at St. George's. Their old and lovable dog Pepper feels at home on the campus as well.

Summing up his thoughts about his Lexington School years, Jay, greatly influenced by his TLS teachers and now a longtime school administrator himself, says with tremendous ardor, "There is no better investment in children than an independent education."



From Dallas, TX, **Amera Hussein Sergie '93** writes that she completed her master's in clinical/counseling psychology from Southern Methodist University in 2007. More recently, she worked as the counseling department program director for 6 1/2 years at Mosaic Family Services, a Dallas non-profit. Mosaic serves survivors of human trafficking as well as immigrants and refugees who are survivors of domestic violence. Since Amera grew up bilingual, she was able to treat her clients in Arabic as well as English. This was especially gratifying for her, as many of the most recent immigrants and refugees to the U.S. are Middle Eastern Arabic speakers. "Speaking of languages," she notes, "my TLS French has come in very handy: my mother-in-law is French Canadian." Amera's husband of nine years is Aly Sergie, a dentist with his own practice, In Focus Dentistry.

After daughter Selma was born in July 2013, Amera left Mosaic, opening The Source, a private counseling practice *(www.TheSourceCounseling.com)*. She now works part time, thoroughly enjoys motherhood, and stays at home with Selma, whose name means *peaceful* in Arabic. As Amera says, "Life is truly beautiful!"

She closes by saying, "I'm not sure if Mr. Parlanti remembers my one-armed push-ups and/or my competitiveness, but he would probably like to know that health and athletics have been a huge part of my life unto this day. I am also still very competitive."

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ALUMNI SNAPS



The Phillipses enjoy their 15th (and last, as a current TLS family) Holiday Concert. With **Ellie '14** are **Bo '10**, a senior at Henry Clay Liberal Arts Academy, Dad and Mom, John and Beth, and **Jack '12**, a Henry Clay Liberal Arts Academy sophomore.



Lexington School alumni voices add to the Sayre Holiday Concert. From left: **John Newton '11**, **Ellie Alford '13**, **Trent Lott '13**, **Robert Bratton '13**, **Andrew Beck '13**, **Mia Pulliam '13**, **Kennedy Sabharwal '13**, **Walker Montgomery '13**, **Lauren White '13**, **Logan Mitchell '11**, **Madison Montgomery '11**, and **Alex Webb '11**.







Fourth grade teacher Mark Scarr with his children, **Emily '98**, **Eli '91**, and **Abraham '95** (LEFT) Classmates from **1976** share old stories; John Congleton, John Marshall, and Bill Cox.

HOLIDAY HOMECOMING

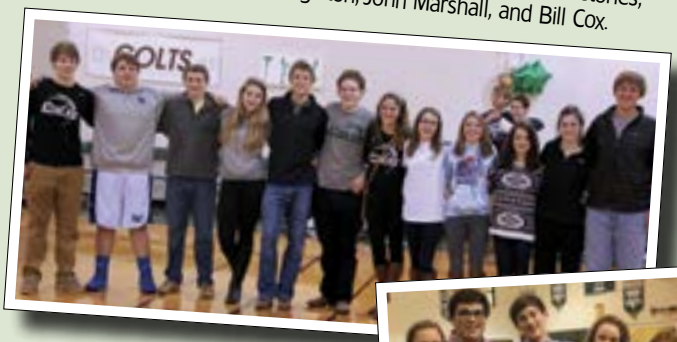
ABOVE Erin and Chuck Baldecchi welcome the Lansill family back from San Rafael, California, to Scarlet Gate. With the Baldecchis are Karen Lansill; her husband Clay Lansill; Mr. Lansill's mother, Cary Gratz Lansill Rowland; and Mr. and Mrs. Lansill's sons, Alexander and Christopher. Mr. Lansill's grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. John S. Lansill Sr., were the first of four generations of the Lansill family to live at Scarlet Gate.

RIGHT FROM THE TOP Alumni Council president **Jeff Truitt '85** with wife Suzanne and parents, Sue Ann and Jerry; Friends from the **Class of 2004**, Mary Van Meter, Audrey Akers, Kate MacNeil, and Nancy McKinstry; and longtime friends **Callie Brooks Picardo '99** and **Alden Purdy Pinkham '99** with their husbands, Rosario Picardo and Dan Pinkham









SPIRIT NIGHT: Colts vs. Spartans

ABOVE James Dupree, Cole Terrill, Tyler Levy, Sarah Jewell Noonan, Walker Montgomery, Taylor Johnson, Julia Harris, Ashton Woody, Katie Kostelic, Delia Kessinger, Sydney Young, and Andrew Beck. *RIGHT (clockwise)* Tessa Fry, Strohmann Breeding, Stevan Kriss, Clara de Castro, Emma Stone, Jade Wright, and Merrick Irwin. *BOTTOM RIGHT* Taylor Johnson, Andrew Beck, Mr. Joe Conley, and Tyler Levy.





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The Lexington School admits students of any race, religion, color, sex, national, or ethnic origin.

From *The Archives*



The **Class of 1993** takes time out from a ninth grade field trip to the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History and Science. *Front row* Joseph Hillenmeyer, Taylor Baker, Belle Fair Graves, Erica Cohen, and Emmy Gambet. *Back Row* Mr. John Christie, Allie Collier, Helen Van Clief, Mary Shearer, Amera Hussein, Jamie Butler, Sara Dean, Marcy Butler, Virginia Lacefield, Jason Hills, Whitney Bentley, and Ellen Rice. *For an update on class members, see Pin Notes on page 24.*