

February 23, 2015

As the Board of Trustees and administration continue to focus on our Strategic Plan, we have made a decision to expand our middle school. This result was determined through an in-depth, multi-faceted review of the areas below:

- Enrollment – plan per grade level
- Resources – facilities, faculty/staff, technology
- Stewardship – financial sustainability for EDS

Also included was an analysis of our Wee School (infants through two-year olds program), which has been in existence for four years.

Based on the school's mission that focuses on academic excellence, as well as the results of this thorough review, the Board of Trustees established a three-year plan that streamlines enrollment to meet the goals of these areas. The plan is as follows:

***Episcopal Day School plans to expand enrollment by ten (10) students in each grade six (6) through eight (8) over a three-year period. During this same time, EDS will reduce the Wee School program from five (5) classrooms of infants through two-year olds to one classroom of two-year olds, in the 2017-2018 school year.***

This change will allow concentrated attention to academic excellence, including relevant use of facilities, focus on academic faculty and their professional development, and the utilization of our robust technology infrastructure for this purpose.

Ultimately, kindergarten and grade one will move to the Hilton Green Campus as the infants and one-year olds programs are gradually concluded; thus, allocating more space at the south campus for grades 2-8. Grades 6-8 will grow to approximately 54 students, in 3 sections per grade (18 per section), as compared to current enrollment of 44 students, in 2 sections per grade. Academic divisions will be restructured to concentrate on developmental needs and relative academic focus.

All current Wee School children will have the opportunity to remain at EDS throughout this transition period, and beyond, as no classes will be concluded until the children are ready to move to the next level.

On the following page you will find an outline of the transition in enrollment, facility use, and academic divisions of the school:

| Year 1: 2015-2016  | Year 2: 2016-2017  | Year 3: 2017-2018   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>ENROLLMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Middle School:</b> Enroll 10 additional students to typical grade 6 enrollment (expand to 3 sections in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, approximately 18 per section, 54 per grade)</li> <li>- <b>Wee School:</b> remains the same – no change this year</li> </ul>   | <p><b>ENROLLMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Middle School:</b> Enroll 10 additional students in grade 6 (3 sections in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades, approximately 18 per section, 54 per grade)</li> <li>- <b>Wee School:</b> Conclude infants program in Wee School;</li> <li>- One-year old children will be in two small groups, sharing a partitioned space in the current infant room.</li> </ul> | <p><b>ENROLLMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Middle School:</b> Enroll 10 additional students in grade 6 (3 sections in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> grades, approximately 18 per section, 54 per grade)</li> <li>- <b>Wee School:</b> Conclude one-year old program;</li> <li>- Two-year old children will be in two small groups, sharing a partitioned space in the current infant room</li> <li>- Two-year olds become part of the Preschool program (PK2) and will be on school year schedule (aftercare and summer camp available)</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>FACILITY USE</b></p> <p><b>South Campus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convert middle school computer lab to 6<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom</li> <li>- Make computer lab mobile; utilize media center as needed</li> </ul>  | <p><b>FACILITY USE</b></p> <p><b>Hilton Green Campus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Move Kindergarten to Hilton Green Campus</li> </ul> <p><b>South Campus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Open STEaM Lab / Maker Space classroom; add an additional middle school classroom</li> </ul>   | <p><b>FACILITY USE</b></p> <p><b>Hilton Green Campus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Move 1<sup>st</sup> grade to Hilton Green Campus</li> </ul> <p><b>South Campus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allocate two additional classrooms: one for enrichment and one for middle school</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>ACADEMIC DIVISIONS</b></p> <p><b>All remain the same as this year-</b></p> <p><b>HGC Campus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wee School, infants through two-year olds;</li> <li>- Preschool- PK3, PK4</li> </ul> <p><b>South Campus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lower School-</li> <li>- Kindergarten – Grade 4</li> <li>- Middle School – Grades 5 – 8</li> </ul> | <p><b>ACADEMIC DIVISIONS</b></p> <p><b>HGC Campus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wee School – one-year olds and two-year olds</li> <li>- Preschool – PK3, PK4, Kindergarten</li> </ul> <p><b>South Campus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lower School – Grades 1 – 4</li> <li>- Middle School – Grades 5 – 8</li> </ul>  | <p><b>ACADEMIC DIVISIONS</b></p> <p><b>HGC Campus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lower School - PK2, PK3, PK4, Kindergarten, and Grade 1</li> </ul> <p><b>South Campus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intermediate School – Grades 2 – 5*</li> <li>- Middle School – Grades 6 – 8</li> </ul>  |

**\*Fifth Grade** - The Fifth grade program will present a unique model that focuses on the developmental needs of these children as they begin to emerge from a carefully guided and structured school experience to the more independent and self-reliant demands of the Middle School. The two fifth grade homerooms will be partially self-contained. These students will have 2 core teachers: one for English and Social Studies, and another for Math and Science. They will spend most of their day in one of two adjacent rooms. In addition to their core subjects and the usual enrichment classes, 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will also have a daily Stretch class, designed to help them “stretch” slowly and comfortably into handling the demands that Middle School will bring. The class will focus on, among other things, study and organizational skills, time management planning, decision-making, note-taking, self-advocacy, and issues surrounding social and emotional growth. Throughout the year students will have multiple opportunities to improve their technology integration skills, their leadership skills, and their ability to work independently. By the 2017-18 academic year, fifth grade will be part of the Intermediate Division of the school (Grades 2-5), but will be jointly supervised by both the Intermediate School Division Head and the Middle School Division Head.

**RESOURCES – Facilities, Faculty/Staff, Technology:**

**Facilities:** Currently, five classrooms are allocated to Wee School, for a total of 50 students. Middle School classes are as full as possible, and several enrichment teachers in Lower and Middle school do not have allocated classroom space. This enrollment plan allows for better use of our facilities for our academic program and centralization of students in divisions that are more developmentally focused.

**Faculty/Staff:** Additional teachers will be hired over the next three years to cover the increase in middle school academic classes, as well as enrichment classes. Beginning in Year 3, 2017-2018, the two-year old Wee School program will become PK2 (two-year old Kindergarten), which is typical in independent schools. PK2 will be integrated into our cohesive academic preschool program, with play at the center of learning.

We are grateful for the dedication of our current staff in Wee School, and we value their commitment to our youngest children. We are a school of compassion, and we have a transitional plan that will support these employees through the process. During this transition, we will make every effort to assist in finding appropriate positions for them, either at EDS or through connections across the city, as programs are discontinued.

**Technology:** The transition plan requires the continued growth of our technology infrastructure across both campuses, especially as we prepare for a 1-to-1 laptop program in middle school and further integration throughout all grade levels. Classroom space will be allocated specifically to the growth of our STEaM and maker space initiatives. Interactive table versions of projectors/screens will be utilized in the Lower School at the HGC campus.

**STEWARDSHIP – Financial Sustainability for EDS:**

Careful consideration was given to financial analysis during this planning process. Being good stewards of your tuition dollars and ensuring the financial stability of the school are priorities in such decisions. Based on our business model for this enrollment plan, we anticipate funding the resulting expenses within our financial plan and without the necessity of additional upward pressure on tuition.

**ADVANTAGES FOR STUDENTS:**

Below you will find some specific advantages that students will experience through the restructuring of Academic Divisions and campus resources.

| Lower School,<br>PK2 through Grade 1   | Intermediate School,<br>Grades 2 through 5   | Middle School,<br>Grades 6 through 8  |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on early childhood development</li> <li>- Secure campus with wide open space for play</li> <li>- Emphasis on early literacy, math skill development</li> <li>- Emphasis on exploratory learning, laying a foundation for STEaM and 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills</li> <li>- First graders become leaders of division</li> <li>- Addition of a credentialed teacher in PK2</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on higher level thinking skills</li> <li>- Emphasis on reading and math skill development</li> <li>- More enrichment classroom space for experiential learning</li> <li>- More playground use opportunities</li> <li>- Enriched curriculum-STEaM, technology, differentiated instruction</li> <li>- Transitional 5<sup>th</sup> grade program with emphasis on middle school preparation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on adolescent development</li> <li>- Enhanced curriculum opportunities, attention to individual strengths</li> <li>- 3 sections per grade facilitates better scheduling options and course offerings; allows for thoughtfully mixing students in classes for social development</li> <li>- Smaller class sizes</li> <li>- Greater opportunities for assemblies, advisory</li> <li>- 1-to-1 laptop program</li> </ul> |

Whenever a school embraces change for the overall strength of its program, there will be facets that cause sadness at the loss of one component in order to realize the benefits of another. Our time with infants and one-year olds has been joyful and rewarding. It has been our pleasure to serve a need in our community, and we will miss having these age groups among us. At the same time, we are excited about what lies ahead for our students' engagement in teaching and learning in better spaces for classrooms and academic divisions, with enhanced course offerings, and a concentrated focus on preparing our students to be moral, ethical citizens who are academically prepared to make a difference in our world.

Below you will find some anticipated Q&A information and a timeline for Key Milestones in this transition. Parents are invited to attend Town Hall Q&A sessions, offered on the following dates and times:

- Wednesday, Feb 25 at 9:00 am in Christ Church
- Thursday, Feb 26 at 5:00 pm at the Hilton Green Campus (ELC), in the cafeteria

## Q & A

**Q:** *How many children will be in the one-year old classes in 2016-2017, and how will it work to have them in the current infant room?*

**A:** The one-year old class will have two small groups of children, up to 9 per group, sharing a partitioned classroom that will allow developmental groupings for various activities and learning experiences. The teacher to child ratio will be at a minimum of 1 teacher to 6 children.

**Q:** *How will this new plan impact PK2 student contracts and school hours?*

**A:** Currently, all Wee School students are on month-to-month agreements, classes run full-year (12 months) and the hours are 7:00 – 5:30pm. With the change, once PK2 is established for the 2017-2018 academic year, PK2 students will be on annual student contracts following normal school hours (7:45 am – 2:45 pm) within the academic year. Extend care during the year will be 7:00-7:45 am and 2:45-5:30 pm, and summer camp will be available.

**Q:** *How many students can be expected in the PK2 class in 2017-2018? How will the teachers be assigned?*

**A:** The PK2 class will be equal in size to the current late 2s Wee School class. Similar to the PK3 and PK4, we will have the capacity to admit up to about 20 students for the PK2 class with one lead, credentialed teacher and two additional teachers.

**Q:** *Will students move to the south campus for kindergarten or Grade 1, and then have to move back to the Hilton Green campus during this transition?*

**A:** No. The current (2014-2015) PK3 class will be the inaugural Kindergarten class at the Hilton Green Campus.

**Q:** *With the move of Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade to the HGC, will these students still have enrichment classes such as art, music, and Spanish?*

**A:** Yes. We anticipate that this change will allow for a more robust enrichment program integrated into the core curriculum. We will continue to have classes, such as art, music, and Spanish, for the students.

**Q:** *Will EDS still have the Chapel Buddy Program with the move of kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade to the HGC?*

**A:** Yes. We will still have chapel buddies once kindergarten and first grade moves to the HGC. Assigned seventh and eighth grade chapel buddies will have the opportunity to attend services at the HGC with their buddies. Once a quarter, the kindergarten and first grade teachers will accompany students to chapel at Christ Church where their buddies will join them. We envision expanding the buddy program beyond chapel and faculty will plan for meaningful opportunities to connect these students across campuses.

**Q:** *Will the current faculty have a role in designing the schedule and coursework for the Middle School, or the Lower School?*

**A:** Yes. Teacher input is integral to this process and to the success of the program, and a distinguishing characteristic of an independent school. Teachers often request the ability to offer more enrichment and specialized courses, and a redesigned schedule based on the three-section model will allow the ability to implement their suggestions. Our valued faculty will be at the heart of shaping the future offerings that reflect academic excellence, allow for differentiated instruction, and integrate 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning. The Lower and Intermediate faculty planning will mirror this model as we strengthen continuity of our scope and sequence of studies for our youngest to oldest students.

**Q:** *How will we recruit students for the new openings in Middle School?*

**A:** The majority of our students come from referrals from our current or former parents. Please continue to share the story of EDS and tell your friends about our Middle School expansion. We will also market this expansion via our website, Facebook, and advertisements.

**Q:** *Will admissions criteria change in order to admit more students in Middle School?*

**A:** No. EDS will not bend on our admission standards and will continue to follow the same criteria to admit academically qualified students. Additionally, we seek those families who support the mission of our school.

**Q:** *Will this change increase the class sizes in Middle School?*

**A:** No. In the Middle School, typically we've had 44 per grade level with 22 in each section. Going forward, we will have 3 sections per grade and smaller class sizes. We anticipate approximately 54 students in each grade, resulting in three sections of about 18 students per grade.

EDS will be the first and only independent school in Pensacola with the ability to provide an emphasis on individualized and differentiated instruction by offering 3 sections of approximately 18 students per grade in the Middle School.

**Q:** *How was the announcement of the timing decided?*

**A:** The decision to conduct an analysis of the Wee School was driven by the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan and the number of years in which the Wee School has been in operation. When the committee began the analysis, it was originally thought that they would need until late spring to complete it and make a recommendation to the Board for 2016-2017. However, the committee concluded its research and was ready to make a recommendation ahead of schedule in mid-February. The Board's endorsement of this recommendation happened to fall soon after re-enrollment contracts were issued. The timing was coincidental, however, it was determined that it was in the best interest of the school to move forward with a decision and enroll students accordingly for 2015-2016.

**Q:** *Will the children entering into the infant program remain in the same room throughout their enrollment in the Wee School?*

**A:** Our goal is to provide your child with the same exceptional care you have grown to expect from EDS. Throughout the course of the transition, we are dedicated to ensuring that the needs of the children in our care are met. While children will remain in the same physical room (current infants room), we will work each year to "reinvent" the space to be developmentally appropriate to the age of the children in the room and have a fresh look and feel. There are also plans to partition off the room so that the children will be in two smaller groups that are aligned to their developmental milestones.

**Q:** When will EDS communicate updates about the Middle School expansion to parents?

**A:** We will be hosting orientation sessions in late spring for the current 4<sup>th</sup> Grade and current 5<sup>th</sup> Grade parents to go into further detail regarding expectations for next year, as well as summer work. Parents of new students will also be included to enable the opportunity to welcome them to EDS and inform all parents together about the exciting year ahead. More information about these orientations sessions is forthcoming, and we will communicate meeting times with advanced notice.

## Key Milestones

