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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Understanding #ONECOMMUNITY	1	Odyssey of the Mind Teams Win World Honors.....	13
3 COVID Changes on Campus Worth Keeping	2-4	Caring for the Community with Wellbeing Tools	14-15
New Initiative Focuses on Student Success	5	STEAM Programs Cultivate Curiosity.....	16-17
Big Changes: Farish and App Lab	6-9	5 Reason K-8 Schools Benefit Kids	18-19
New Principal Positions Enhance Leadership Opportunities	10	Middle School Mural Brings Class Together Through Art.....	20-21
International Baccalaureate Fosters Global Connections.....	11 -12	Creativity Helps Fine Arts Thrive.....	22-23
Alumni Return to Campus with Inspiration	13	Athletics Update	24-25
		Joy in Learning.....	26-29

UNDERSTANDING #ONECOMMUNITY

BY HEAD OF SCHOOL NICHOLAS B. RODRIGUEZ



When the 2020-21 school year began, the #OneCommunity message served as a compelling reminder that Corbett Prep remained a family regardless of whether students attended classes on campus or remotely.

By the end of the school year, nearly all students had returned to in-person learning. We had also opened our doors to parents for special events, restoring some normalcy in an unusual time. But the #OneCommunity spirit continues to guide our leadership, planning and approach to education.

#OneCommunity means that teachers use cooperative learning techniques and dedicate time to establishing classroom charters that support a climate of dignity and respect. It means that the faculty and staff continually pursue professional development opportunities to learn strategies to improve in their areas of expertise. It means that the school understands the importance of parent involvement and support, whether parents are on campus or on Zoom from home or work.

As members of Corbett Prep's #OneCommunity, we value our different backgrounds and interests and how everyone brings unique perspectives to our learning environment.

Corbett Prep has a history of cultivating relationships with families that last long past graduation. When our alumni return to work for CAMP IDS, attend an event or someday enroll their own children, we appreciate that their connection to Corbett Prep remains strong. The #OneCommunity spirit is a celebration that all of our families, past and present, know they always will have a valued place in our community.

HAVE A GREAT YEAR!



TOP: The entire Middle School gathered on the field on the International Day of Peace to create a peace sign and demonstrate how everyone can work together as #OneCommunity for a larger goal. BOTTOM: Mr. Rodriguez takes a break from Head of School duties to spend some time with students.

3 COVID CHANGES ON CAMPUS WORTH KEEPING

Kids on yoga mats reading by the pond. Field trips to faraway places made possible through Zoom. A night of poetry under the stars with Middle School students.

Educating students during a pandemic posed challenges for schools, and Corbett Prep teachers and administrators re-examined everything from classroom seating to lunchtime to specials and electives. But for all the headaches, the adjustments inspired creative approaches to engaging kids. The growth mindset Corbett Prep faculty and staff embraced turned challenges into opportunities and gave rise to inventive solutions, fresh takes on traditions and a spirit of collaboration.

While 2021-22 allowed Corbett Prep to move closer to normalcy, some of the new approaches COVID brought to school life proved to be worth preserving.

Outside Classrooms

Decks, patios, grassy spaces and nooks on Corbett Prep's campus – tucked along a lake under the cypress trees – offered numerous options for outdoor learning during the pandemic. Teachers put yoga mats on school supply lists and then planned lessons and reading time to take full advantage of the outside for distanced mask breaks.

PreK3 students sat criss-cross on their mats for morning story time, as older students sprawled on the banks of the pond and the Middle School field to read on their own. Art projects and science activities found homes on decks and sidewalks as well as at picnic

tables. Middle School students worked in small groups at tables on the plaza, which later included a temporary stage constructed for class performances and STEAM Symposium presentations.

Spending time outside continues to benefit students even as the COVID threat decreases. The change in scenery from the classroom helps students regain focus when distracted. It can improve moods, inspire creativity and increase productivity. Some research suggests that exposure to natural light is good for eyesight, too. An outdoor campus also provides a valuable extension of the learning environment, with plenty of plants and animals to observe and study.

Zoom Connections

Zoom fatigue is real. But the reason the platform became so popular during the pandemic was its ease of use and availability. Now that families and teachers are familiar with Zoom, it remains a great option for special purposes.

Last year, Zoom made it possible for teachers to take students on field trips across time zones. During an International Baccalaureate unit on farm-to-table, PreK4 students met farmers in Minnesota and Spain, all thanks to Zoom. Intermediate students learned about the legislative process from a state representative Zooming from Tallahassee. Bestselling authors discussed their books in Corbett Prep classrooms without leaving their homes.

Zoom let busy parents drop into their children's classes virtually from work or from home to read

TOP: Moving class outside, left, can help students regain focus and increase productivity. An outdoor stage, right, gives audience members a safe way to watch the Middle School's Poetry Coffeehouse in person. MIDDLE: On-campus and remote students work together to create project presentations online for Spanish class. Picnic tables, right, provide the perfect spot for students to spread out and conduct science experiments. BOTTOM: PreK4 students, left, enjoy a guest speaker from across the country thanks to Zoom. Kindergarten teachers, right, lead a lesson on protecting the environment and encourage students to record their observations about the pond.



3 CAMPUS CHANGES WORTH KEEPING

books, celebrate birthdays and attend conferences. Live streaming of student performances and virtual auctions opened up events for additional and even extended family participation.

Corbett Prep will continue to embrace the platform as a way to build connections and increase access to people and places otherwise out of reach.

Fresh Traditions

Before scheduling traditional events and projects in 2020-21, teachers and school leaders evaluated them through a lens of health and safety to make allowances for large audiences and social distancing. The facilities staff built two outdoor stages for school musicals, class plays, the STEAM Symposium and the Middle School's Poetry Coffeehouse, resulting in several peaceful evenings outside for families to enjoy the arts and student presentations.

The Powder Puff football game and the Student-Faculty Challenge gained new energy when they were moved out of the gyms onto the field. The Spring Fine Arts concert stayed indoors but received a makeover, splitting the whole-school production into smaller shows that gave each class more chances to shine.

Technology helped other classroom traditions evolve. Sixth graders in the People Fair, for example, performed their biographical monologues only to their classmates instead of parent audiences, and students edited videos of themselves to embed in Adobe Spark presentations they created to share. The fifth grade IB Exhibition included digital presentations on topics students researched in place of the traditional group display boards that invited crowds.

What will schooling look like in the future? School leaders must remain flexible and open to new ideas as they stay on top of the latest health information. Corbett Prep looked forward to a new school year that included hosting gatherings and reinstating field trips and excursions. But 2020-21 brought bright spots, too. Along with new traditions in reimagined spaces, Corbett Prep plans to hold on to the solution-seeking mentality that led to positive outcomes from lessons learned after an unprecedented year.



TOP TO BOTTOM: First and second graders take over the sidewalk to create a mural about kindness together; the Student-Faculty Sports Challenge moves from the gym to the field for an afternoon of school spirit; music teachers preserve the Warriors' Pride Chorus tradition without missing a beat by moving the annual musical outside.



NEW INITIATIVE FOCUSES ON STUDENT SUCCESS



Students, parents and teachers will now have a centralized resource to turn to that sets students up for success from their acceptance to Corbett Prep through their 8th grade graduation.

The Student Success Department highlights the value that Corbett Prep places on the uniqueness of every learner. Cris Ferrone, a 25-year educator, will direct the department, advocating for students' needs and bringing together the many sources of support Corbett Prep offers while adding new programs to benefit all students.

"That's what we want to focus on – success for all students," Ferrone says.

Joining Ferrone in leading the new department is Linda Wenzel, Corbett Prep's Director of Studies, who has 40 years of experience as a teacher and educational leader with a focus on curriculum. Bettyann Pitti will act as the classroom liaison for the department, connecting with students in all grade levels. Pitti joined Corbett Prep 25 years ago as a librarian and media specialist, and she has also taught in the classroom and worked with small groups of students as a reading specialist.

The Student Success Department will work directly with teachers and families to **strengthen communication, augment classroom strategies and ensure best educational practices for different learning styles**. That could mean finding extra help for some students in specific subjects or offering creative projects to challenge students to go above and beyond.

Ferrone, whose background is in the classroom and in student services, is also designing a study skills curriculum to teach Middle School students **strategies for executive functioning, organization, time management and test taking**. She will help eighth-grade parents navigate the high school admissions process, introducing them to public and private options and assisting them with paperwork and deadlines.

A teacher at Corbett Prep since 2008 and mother of two alumni, Ferrone is most excited about getting to know the personalities and passions of all the students and giving them tools to grow. That's been the best part of her teaching career, she says: "I love watching students succeed."

BIG CHANGES

FARISH CENTER AND APP LAB

Two renovation projects have transformed Corbett Prep's library and Farish Center into creative, innovative and educational spaces for teachers to empower students in their learning.

Thanks to the support of families and donors, the remodeled Farish Center and reimagined Tomlin Family Application Lab opened in Summer 2021, offering students of all ages a world of possibilities for collaboration, public speaking and discovery.

The Farish Center now features a permanent stage and seating for improved audience, performer and speaker experiences, and the App Lab has moved into the former library, which was given a sleek, modern makeover to match its new function. The library relocated to the App Lab's previous classroom space for a more curated collection of books and an inviting space for Early Primary library time – additional books from library shelves are now found in classrooms to catch the attention of students.

Farish Center

The curtains opened on the first show in the extensively remodeled Farish Center on June 10 with the CAMP IDS production of *Les Miserables*.

For two decades, the Farish Center provided a space for Corbett Prep and Independent Day School performances that push students to test their limits. Audiences have seen future Broadway stars in their debut roles and applauded as student actors flew across the room

in *Peter Pan* and tap danced on the ceiling in *Mary Poppins*. PreK students have found their voices on stage in their first experiences with public speaking, while eighth graders challenged themselves to take risks presenting original poetry and skits.

The Farish Center has also served as an important site for professional development for Corbett Prep teachers and welcomed educators from across the United States for workshops on cooperative learning, social-emotional learning and more.

Corbett Prep now has a physical facility that matches the quality of the creative work students and teachers produce. This proscenium theatre boasts retractable seating for up to 175 audience members, a permanent stage, new lights and sound and a curtain and rigging system (a gift from the Class of 2020). The low stage, comfortable seating and improved sight lines work well for conferences and speakers as well as student productions.

Adjacent to Farish, the Betty Anderson Room, named for one of the school founders, has new tile flooring, fresh paint and a streamlined look to suit its many uses as a dance studio, backstage area, rehearsal space and classroom for after-school lessons.

The improvements benefit guests and also allow students to hone their skills in a more professional environment. Stage managers and crew members will learn to operate lights, sound and projectors as on-stage presenters gain confidence and develop poise speaking before audiences.

Two major renovation projects during spring 2021 brought significant changes to spaces students in all grades use.

TOP: Performers in Shrek the Musical Jr. during CAMP IDS wave to the audience from the new stage. The renovations also added retractable seating to improve the audience experience. MIDDLE: Stage construction, left, marked the final phase of the Farish Center transformation. In the former library, right, bookshelves gave way to a high tech flexible space to serve multiple needs as the Tomlin Family Application Lab. BOTTOM: Members of the Tomlin Family cut the ribbon to open the App Lab to students and teachers. A robotics station awaits its first guests.



BIG CHANGES: FARISH CENTER & APP LAB

Tomlin Family Application Lab

A traditional school library that for decades served students well for storytime, homework and checking out books received a redesign that puts the facility on the cutting edge of technology and education.

Though construction is complete, the academic transformation continues as a new App Lab team introduces an interdisciplinary curriculum built into every PreK3-8th grade student's weekly schedule.

The Tomlin Family Application Lab started as a maker space in 2016 for special class activities, small group enrichment and after-school clubs. In 2018, Corbett Prep expanded the lab's reach and renamed it to honor the Tomlins, a dedicated alumni family. Part wood shop, part technology center, the App Lab was packed with equipment and soon outgrew its classroom.

Relocating to the library building offered the

opportunity to inspire collaboration, reach all students and expand the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art of design and mathematics) program. Library services could function just as effectively in the smaller footprint of the former App Lab classroom.

Before switching spaces, the App Lab and library were emptied and reorganized. Contractors and the Corbett Prep facilities team gutted and rewired the former library, installed new drywall, painted, added tinted windows, built a presentation stage and laid carpet and tile. The layout establishes zones for virtual reality, programming and computer design near the front, with construction tools for manual design and creative experimentation along the back wall.

Glossy tables that interlock in different configurations and rolling chairs encourage collaboration in groups of all sizes and cast students' work from their laptop screens onto one or more of the surrounding screens.

The 4,000-square-foot remodel also included an over-



After relocating the library books to classrooms and a smaller reading room, the Corbett Prep facilities team begins gutting the space and rebuilding walls to give the Tomlin Family Application Lab a more modern look for individual and collaborative work. The 4,000-square-foot remodel includes zones for virtual reality, programming and robotics as well as a construction section for building projects. On the right, Middle School Design teacher Matt Melnick adds a personal touch by painting the new Corbett Prep spirit logo on the App Lab wall.

BIG CHANGES: FARISH CENTER & APP LAB

haul of the computer lab above the library to include video production as part of the App Lab program. An anchor desk, two green screens, cameras and monitors will allow students to produce WIDS TV broadcasts and experiment with multimedia editing. Rows of computers remain available for classes that need them for keyboarding, coding and projects.

Jessica Wallen, a 20-year educator, serves as Director of the App Lab and oversees the different elements of the program, leading dedicated STEAM specialists and working with classroom teachers. Wallen has taught and created curriculum in many areas and excels at combining formal learning with meaningful and memorable educational experiences.

Learning to work together, build connections, think critically and communicate ideas is as important for students in the Tomlin Family App Lab as learning how to use the technology at their fingertips. The App Lab's mission is to inspire beyond-the-box thinking, and while its inventive space is fully stocked with resources, it also provides a perfect blank slate for imaginations to thrive.



TOP: The Laney Literacy Center reopened in August 2021 in a fresh new space, perfect for story time. MIDDLE: Middle School's Thespian Induction ceremony in May was one of the first events held on the Farish Center stage. BOTTOM: The sign in front of the Tomlin Family Application Lab reflects the values teachers hope to instill in students visiting the App Lab. The App Lab has grown from a small maker space to a two-story facility that inspires "beyond the box thinking" and is regularly available to all students in PreK3-8th grade.

NEW PRINCIPAL POSITIONS ENHANCE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Two experienced Corbett Prep educators who share a passion for bringing out the best in students joined Head of School Nicholas Rodriguez's leadership team in July 2021.

Mike Johnson and Jennifer Jagdmann both have spent more than a dozen years in teaching and administrative roles. Johnson, Corbett Prep's Associate Head of School for the past three years, will continue as Associate Head and now serve as the Elementary Principal (PreK3 through 5th grade). Jagdmann, Middle School Division Leader, takes on additional responsibilities as Middle School Principal (6th through 8th grade).

As principals, both will provide day-to-day academic leadership for the grades they oversee and assume responsibility for Corbett Prep's curriculum to support students' educational experiences now and into the future.

"Mike Johnson and Jennifer Jagdmann have spent their careers becoming master educators," Rodriguez said when announcing the promotions. "I have been honored to work with these individuals who exemplify what it means to lead students and teachers to the very best educational experience."

This new structure – a head of school, two academic principals and a team of division leaders – enhances communication and consistency and positions leaders to work directly with Corbett Prep teachers, students and families from multiple angles.

Johnson's 15-year career in education began as an elementary STEM coordinator in Chicago. Johnson holds two master's degrees, in elementary education and educational leadership, and embraces the lifelong learning mentality that he hopes to instill in students. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in

quality management and leadership, researching how to establish the best educational environment for students and faculty.

Johnson joined Corbett Prep five years ago as Director of Instructional Technology and in 2018 was promoted to Associate Head of School. An innovative educator, Johnson always seeks to create teachable moments for students and teachers.

Jagdmann began her classroom career as a language and literature teacher at Corbett Prep in 2004. Her ability to connect with middle school students resulted in strong class communities during her years in the seventh-grade classroom. Through Corbett Prep's support and her own desire to further her knowledge in curriculum and instruction, Jagdmann became an International Baccalaureate trainer for the Americas and an international trainer in Concept-Based Curriculum and Education. Her deep understanding of the philosophies of IB and concept-based education as well as Corbett Prep's culture made her a natural instructional leader of her faculty peers.

In 2015, Jagdmann became the IB Coordinator for the IB Middle Years Programme at Corbett Prep, and three years later she assumed the role of Middle School Division Leader. Her B.S. is in secondary English education, and she completed her M.S. in educational leadership this summer.

Both Johnson and Jagdmann see themselves as "mission-driven leaders" who live the Corbett Prep philosophy to foster children's capacities for learning and help them grow morally and emotionally as well as physically and intellectually. They are excited to work with educators who strive to continually raise the bar and find new ways to challenge, support and inspire students.



INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE FOSTERS GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

From the outside, the International Baccalaureate Programme at Corbett Prep may look like PreK4 students cultivating seeds and talking to farmers near and far about the plants they grow, the animals they raise and how their work supports the community.

It may look like first and second graders playing the roles of business owners and consumers as they learn about goods and services and navigate their way through supply and demand as an introduction to the global economy.

It may look like fifth graders sharing their passions through live performances and digital presentations as they seek to inspire and inform others, learning firsthand how people connect and organize to solve problems.

It may look like Middle School students combining action and service to produce a long-term community project that encourages them to reflect on their years as IB students and the outcomes of their work.

But IB is more than engaging lessons and projects that cap off units of study or the completion of a program. The entire time students are learning subject-area content, they are gaining less visible but highly important skills.

“The goal is that by the end of the IB program, learners will be able to think critically, solve complex problems and challenge assumptions,” says Holly Ralph, a Corbett Prep teacher and one of the IB Programme Coordinators. “Students will be more culturally aware, able to learn across disciplines and engage with people in a changing world.”



Fifth graders, top, use the Exhibition performance and presentation to show what they have learned as students who have completed the Primary Years Programme.

PreK4 students, bottom, grew bean sprouts as part of their IB “Farm to Table” unit.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE FOSTERS GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Corbett Prep became an International Baccalaureate school in 2007 with the Middle Years Programme for 6th-8th grade. In 2009, it was authorized for the Primary Years Programme for PreK3-5th grade. IB appealed to Corbett Prep administrators because they wanted to build curiosity and create inquirers, says Jennifer Jagdmann, Middle School Principal and MYP coordinator.

IB schools undergo evaluations every five years to ensure they are following the program's rules and standards. The reviews are a rewarding experience, Jagdmann says, because they allow Corbett Prep to hold itself accountable and maintain a continuous improvement model.

The next IB evaluation will take place in the 2021-22 school year, the first time the organization is looking at the Primary and Middle Years Programmes simultaneously. Doing so will allow IB and Corbett Prep to see the continuum of progress from the elementary to the middle grades. Some Corbett Prep graduates choose to stay with IB, enrolling in rigorous diploma programs in public and private high schools.

The time students spend in IB at Corbett Prep helps them become internationally minded and allows them to discover connections between people, fostering empathy. They also find connections between subject areas and develop multidisciplinary thinking.

Linda Wenzel, Corbett Prep's director of studies and an IB coordinator, says the program places learning in a global context and looks at the human economy – the qualities that surpass what machines can do.

With a diverse student body, a longstanding relationship with sister schools in Spain and the global connections teachers cultivate, Corbett Prep offers a multicultural education that challenges students to consider other perspectives and prepares them to participate in the 21st century global workforce.



TOP TO BOTTOM: Fifth grade students create digital presentations on important causes they researched; PreK3 students are proud to show their artwork in a gallery following an IB unit on self expression; in the sixth-grade People Fair, students share the IB Learner Profile traits their historical figures demonstrate.

ALUMNI RETURN TO CAMPUS WITH INSPIRATION

Corbett Prep teachers helped Madison Brodsky identify her strengths in writing and performance – skills that would prove important in her future career as an entertainment reporter – and the coaching they provided on standing and speaking with presence gave her confidence in front of crowds and in new situations.

Brodsky, Class of 2009, shared her memories and experiences with Middle School students during a special presentation in the spring. She was one of several alumni to return to their alma mater in 2021 to offer encouragement, inspiration and advice to current students.

Lorenzo Largent, Class of 2015, spoke on an alumni panel of university students studying in STEAM fields about the work he is doing as an aerospace engineering student at the University of Michigan. Another panel discussion, held on the last day of school, brought back four graduates with advice on colleges, careers and dreams. Ellyn McAvoy (Class of 2005), Anthony Nelson (Class of 2014), Greg Tomlin (Class of 2008) and Kritos Vasiloudes (Class of 2008) shared the importance of making the most of their time at Corbett Prep and what they wished they had known in Middle School.

Corbett Prep began expanding its alumni outreach in 2018 when it celebrated its 50th anniversary. The school established an alumni association to build connections with its graduates and invite them back to participate in school traditions, alumni spirit days, networking events and talks with current students.

During Brodsky's visit, students had the chance to ask her what a broadcast journalist does, how she landed celebrity interviews for TMZ and ET and how they could prepare for their dream jobs.

Brodsky had just the right answer. "Try everything you can at Corbett Prep," she told them, "because this is a safe space, and your teachers will encourage you to reach your goals."



Joyce Burick Swarzman and Jennifer Jagdmann pose with alumna Madison Brodsky, who thanked both of them and other Corbett Prep teachers for supporting her dreams while she was a student.

ODYSSEY OF THE MIND TEAMS WIN WORLD HONORS

It's official – Corbett Prep's Odyssey of the Mind teams are among the best in the world! Two Corbett Prep Middle School teams won third place in their categories in the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals in June 2021, wowing the international panel of judges and pushing themselves to new levels in the innovative problem-solving competition.



Eighth-grade Odyssey of the Mind teammates celebrate a successful OM season with their parent volunteer coaches. Corbett Prep hosted six teams in 2020-21 for students in first through eighth grade.

Corbett Prep hosted six OM teams in 2020-21 with 39 Corbett Prep students in first through eighth grade. All teams

placed in the top three at the Florida state competition in Orlando, earning bids to both Virtual and In-Person World Finals and the most accolades of any program there. Eighth graders also brought home the Ranatra Fusca Award for exceptional creativity, the highest honor that can be awarded in OM.

Odyssey of the Mind challenges students to draw from all disciplines to invent amazing solutions to problems, developing new skills and confidence in the process. Parent volunteer coaches spend hundreds of hours supporting the students as they prepare original solutions to problems in a range of categories.

Corbett Prep's program is just three years old, but the values of Odyssey of the Mind align with the school's engaging and cooperative approaches to learning. With creativity and open mindedness, students are ready to tackle all sorts of challenges.

CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY

Corbett Prep leaders knew wellness in schools deserved to be a priority when they piloted a social-emotional learning program in 2016. But the Four Pillars of Wellbeing brought unexpected benefits four years later when the pandemic struck.

The resources available for Corbett Prep faculty, staff, students and families through the Contentment Foundation's Four Pillars proved invaluable for coping with stress and strengthening the community. The pandemic underscored the importance of mental health as well as physical health, and teachers drew from their wellbeing training to help their students and their colleagues.

Before they reached out to others, however, teachers had to turn the focus inside.

"You can't pour from an empty cup," says Jennifer Jones, a Corbett Prep first and second grade teacher and one of the Four Pillars coordinators. "If we take care of ourselves first, we can bring out the best in each other and ourselves. When you can take care of teachers, teachers can take care of kids and teach kids to protect each other and themselves."

The Four Pillars of Wellbeing curriculum provides research-based tools for all grade levels to create a culture of mindfulness, community, self curiosity and contentment and balance. Corbett Prep teachers worked closely with developers first at Yale University and later with the nonprofit Contentment Foundation to pilot the program, providing feedback and writing and editing lessons.

In 2019, the Contentment Foundation rolled out the Four Pillars of Wellbeing online platform



Middle School teachers made students "mind jars" to help them focus and calm racing thoughts. Classes take brief moments in their rooms or outside to practice mindful breathing as taught in the Four Pillars of Wellbeing.

WITH WELLBEING TOOLS

internationally, once again using Corbett Prep as a model school. That year, Corbett Prep welcomed educators from schools across the United States to attend training sessions and an open house, allowing visitors to observe classrooms to see the Four Pillars in action.

Today, several Corbett Prep faculty members serve as rollout representatives to assist other schools as they implement the Four Pillars for their staff and students. The practices are part of daily life at Corbett Prep, and teachers continue to study how best to incorporate the concepts and techniques in the classroom.

But the program also provides a blueprint for personal growth. A Corbett Prep wellness team made up of faculty and staff members devotes its sole focus to supporting all adults in the school ecosystem with wellness, ensuring employees can function at their best for students and families. Faculty members take regular surveys about wellbeing, using the results to review the climate around campus and in their divisions and to find areas in their own lives that need more attention, such as stress management or healthy choices.

The Four Pillars also includes a wonderful extension for families, Jones says. The Contentment Family App offers parents the same resources and training as the teachers receive. Parents and children can share a common wellness language and grow together at home, reinforcing the strategies students learn at school.

Approaching wellbeing with a program that faculty, students and parents can share embodies Corbett Prep's commitment to #OneCommunity. The Four Pillars provides the ability to examine individual needs and consider the broader community with tools that are helpful during both challenging and ordinary times.



The Four Pillars of Wellbeing are mindfulness, community, self curiosity and contentment and balance. The program helps people of all ages learn strategies that help them care for themselves and others.

STEAM PROGRAMS

CULTIVATE CURIOSITY

It starts in PreK3 when students crawl into tents to explore how they rely on different senses in darkness and in light. In first and second grade, students curious about how a rover can land on Mars make their own parachutes to try to land a toy payload. When they get to Middle School, students will use the engineering design cycle and their knowledge of force and motion to build containers that can protect an egg tossed from the top of Raymond James Stadium.

STEAM programs at Corbett Prep take students on a journey of inquiry that evolves with them as they grow. Through Science, Technology, Engineering, the Art of Design and Mathematics, students learn to wonder, try, try again, find connections and draw conclusions.

Classroom and enrichment opportunities allow students to take STEAM learning into their own hands. Geometry students figure out how to apply their knowledge of right triangles to paint accurate lines and angles on the baseball field. Upper Primary students spritz topographical models with water to see how runoff affects lakes and oceans. Students interested in environmental science volunteer for weekend educational trips to the beach to learn more about that ecosystem.

The STEAM Symposium, a five-year tradition, allows students to share their passions with others and showcase the process of discovery. Students in third through eighth grade volunteer to work on their own time with faculty mentors to develop presentations that answer intriguing questions or explore topics important to them.



When NASA landed a rover on Mars, first and second graders experimented with making parachutes to help their own toy payloads land safely on the playground.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Middle School students apply their knowledge of the engineering design cycle to invent a container that protects an egg from a high fall. The STEAM Symposium allows students in third through eighth grade the chance to research questions that interest them and present their findings in the style of a TED Talk.

Part science fair, part TED Talk, the symposium gives students practice with public speaking in front of classmates and parents as they share what they have learned and champion innovation in education. As a student-driven event, the symposium changes based on the participants involved and what's current and relevant to them. Topics for 2021 reflected their vast interests including space exploration, viruses, health, psychology and conservation.

Corbett Prep's STEAM opportunities continue to grow with the expansion of the Tomlin Family Application Lab. App Lab specialists work with classroom teachers to develop cross-curricular lessons that give students additional practice with virtual reality, robotics, circuitry and more as well as low-tech, traditional construction tools and crafting materials that inspire imagination and experimentation.

The skills the students learn in the App Lab and other STEAM programs transcend specific subjects.

STEAM teaches students to think critically and creatively and improves their ability to assess and solve problems. By tapping in to the natural curiosity of children and encouraging them to ask questions, teachers help students develop perseverance and gain a better understanding of the material they study to work through the different tools available to them to find solutions. Teachers reassure students that road-blocks they run into in STEAM projects and classwork are OK – what matters is how they face them.

HIGHLIGHT: REGIONAL STEAM FAIR WINNERS

Student projects that represented Corbett Prep at the 2021 Hillsborough Regional STEM Fair:

- **Ankita Dutta** (5th Grade) received a Superior Award for her project titled "Saving Energy: Designing an Underground Food Storage." The purpose of her experiment was to find something that would keep food cool and fresh without electricity to save energy.
- **Samantha Reed** (5th Grade) received an Excellent Award for her project titled "Flour Power." The purpose of her project was to find out what type of flour fits the type of cake a baker wants to bake.
- **Kalie Haas** (4th Grade) received an Excellent Award for her project titled "Mindfulness and Calmness." The purpose of her project was to investigate the effect of mindfulness on the calmness of a person.
- **Kiran Srinivas** (4th Grade) received a Superior Award for her project titled "Does Electricity Influence the Height of Plant Growth?" The purpose of her project was to investigate how electricity affects the height of plant growth.
- **Ethan Freundt** (3rd Grade) received an Award of Participation for his project titled "Do All Pomegranates That Weigh the Same Have the Same Number of Arils?" The purpose of his project was to understand how plant genetics lead to variation in fruits.

5 Reasons

K-8 SCHOOLS BENEFIT KIDS

Middle school seems miles away when parents enroll in PreK or kindergarten, and families of sixth graders are usually looking toward the future instead of the grades behind them. But the grade levels schools may include – elementary, middle, high, or a combination of two or three – can affect the experiences students have when enrolled there.

A school such as Corbett Prep that includes elementary and middle grades only, known as a K-8 model, offers advantages to students socially and academically over a school that stops at fifth grade or extends to high school.

Here are 5 ways the K-8 approach helps students.

1. Life is good as a “top dog:” A school where eighth graders are the oldest gives middle school students the chance to be “top dogs” at a time in their lives when they are especially vulnerable, according to a 2016 study in the *American Educational Research Journal*.

At a school that starts with sixth grade, however, middle school-aged students sit at the bottom of the pecking order. Shifting from “top dog” status in fifth grade to the bottom rung as a sixth grader may contribute to academic declines in middle school, already a difficult time for students due to hormonal changes and peer pressures.



Schools that include only elementary and middle grades give middle school students the opportunity to act as role models for younger classmates. By graduation, eighth graders have had years of support to discover their strengths and passions and are able to select a high school that fits them best.



Corbett Prep's annual Field Day builds community by pairing older and younger students for the event. Older students guide their buddies through Field Day activities and practice leadership skills, and the elementary students look up to their new friends. The relationships that develop during these mentorship opportunities as well as the increased familiarity with the Middle School make for a smoother transition when the time comes for students to enter sixth grade.

Students who attend schools that encompass kindergarten through 8th grade — such as Corbett Prep, which starts in PreK3 — have more chances to be “top dogs.” That privilege translates into a better social and academic experience, even for new students who transfer into a K-8 school during their middle school years.

“Top dogs” felt safer at school, reported fewer disciplinary instances and benefited from increased academic achievement, the research said.

2. Leaders emerge: As the oldest at their school, middle school students act as role models for their younger classmates. Corbett Prep hosts special Middle School retreats and overnight trips to help sixth through eighth graders learn leadership skills, discover their personal strengths and work together as teams. Middle School students can serve as ambassadors to school guests, giving tours and answering questions about Corbett Prep. They plan community service efforts or school spirit days and learn to advocate to the administration when they want changes, such as adding refillable water bottle stations to campus or establishing an eSports league.

When older students partner with younger buddies at schoolwide events or in their classes, everyone benefits. At Corbett Prep, elementary students also have opportunities to participate in certain sports or performances alongside the Middle School kids. The friendships formed build community and prepare younger students to step in as mentors one day.

3. Volunteering is easy: The elementary and middle school model also encourages parents to stay active in their children’s education. A key indicator of student success, parent involvement remains steady through the middle grade years in K-8 schools, while engagement tends to drop off after students graduate from K-5 elementary schools. At a K-8 school, middle school parents are comfortable volunteering and have had years of positive community experiences and

connections. They also may have younger children at the school, motivating them to stay involved.

4. It benefits kids socially and academically: Middle school can be a tough adjustment, but it doesn’t have to be. Small class sizes, familiar settings, leadership opportunities and an uninterrupted continuum of support help students thrive in K-8 schools, make them feel safe and contribute to a consistently positive environment.

Academically, students from K-8 schools demonstrated a higher GPA in 9th grade. Test scores may improve as well. SAT scores in reading, math, and science are significantly stronger in K-8 schools than in the traditional 6-8 environment, according to a study done by Dr. Robert Offenberg, a researcher for the Philadelphia school district. Students from K-8 schools were 11 percent more likely to be enrolled in selective high school programs.

5. It makes transitions smooth: By the time Corbett Prep students reach Middle School, many are already familiar with the building, faculty and students. Corbett Prep’s student-centered community develops over an 11-year span, emphasizing caring and belonging. Faculty and staff collaborate across grade levels and get to know students well, and teachers meet in the summer to learn from colleagues about the incoming class.

In eighth grade, teachers help each student find their best fit for high school. Having had years of support to discover their strengths and passions, Corbett Prep graduates attend a wide variety of high schools based on their interests – magnet arts or science programs, International Baccalaureate schools, religious education, and rigorous private high schools.

With its caring community and challenging academics, the K-8 school model builds a strong foundation to help students succeed wherever their next step takes them.

As a member of Corbett Prep's Middle School student council, Ben Smith proposed transforming a plain wall by the school parking lot into a beautiful mural.

That was 2019. Then came quarantine.

Corbett Prep shifted to classes entirely off campus for the rest of the 2019-20 school year. When school started in August 2020, families could choose between on-campus and remote learning, pushing teachers to tap into their creativity to find ways to generate excitement and safely continue to cultivate a sense of community.

Teachers Jim Vyverberg and Matt Melnick thought it was the perfect opportunity to revive Ben's idea. Working on a mural would bring students together in a positive way while they explored art fundamentals and gave back to the school.

Vyverberg, the Middle School's art teacher, and Melnick, who teaches design and technology, began working with the eighth grade class in the fall. In February, they unveiled the final result – an eye-catching 170-foot mural with the message "We Are One Community. We Are Corbett Prep."

The 60 eighth graders worked in groups and on their own, designing panels for each letter. Some highlighted favorite Corbett Prep memories. Some used their space as a place to express themselves and their personal style or to experiment with patterns and color.

"It makes me really happy that my idea came to life," said Ben, now an eighth grader.

The Middle School art curriculum this year emphasizes the principles of art, such as proportion and balance. Before they painted on the wall, students practiced mapping out their work on a grid to see how their ideas might translate to a larger scale. Did they have too many tiny details for a large wall? Should they adjust the design to accommodate for the rough texture?

MIDDLE SCHOOL MURAL BRINGS CLASS TOGETHER THROUGH ART

Melnick and Vyverberg focused on logistics. They split each class to spread students out for safety while they painted. They laid out individual panels first on the computer to see if they worked together and sketched out each letter in advance using a projector mounted to a car.

The teachers emphasized to the students that a mural is a form of art that people will see for years so they should work hard on their designs to make their contributions meaningful and enduring. The end result reflects both individuality and unity. Melnick hopes the process was rewarding for students: "It's exciting to create artwork that you know will be seen."

Eighth graders worked in groups and on their own to design individual panels for a 170-foot mural on the back of the Middle School property. Students drew inspiration from their experiences at Corbett Prep and played with patterns, color and proportion. The project, part of students' art and design studies, allowed the Class of 2020 to create a lasting gift for families and visitors to enjoy for years to come.





CREATIVITY

HELPS FINE ARTS THRIVE

Students sang standing on picnic tables. They played Orff instruments overlooking the lake. They danced down the driveway. They turned empty walls into canvases for art.

The fine arts flourished at Corbett Prep in 2020-21 thanks to the ingenuity of teachers determined to give students opportunities to express themselves creatively.

Socially distant seating and a stage on the field allowed Middle School Thespians to perform in person for Corbett Prep audiences for the first time in about a year. During the fall, the students produced two shows, the fairytale mash-up *The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon* and the mainstage musical *Yo, Vikings*. In the spring, Middle School students followed similar health and safety protocols on an outdoor stage for two casts to sing, dance and spell in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*.

Temporary stages outside provided a safe venue for the seventh and eighth grade Poetry Coffeehouse as well as the eighth grade play, events that give all students in those grades valuable experience presenting in front of crowds.

The same location worked well for third, fourth and fifth graders in the Warriors Pride Chorus, whose 2020 show was canceled due to the pandemic. Although 92 students signed up to perform *We Haz Jazz* with Warriors Pride, music teachers Michael LeBlanc and Janice Carlin kept rehearsals small for safety. Each class rehearsed separately until the week of the show, when they came together for outside practices and shows.



Students spread out over campus to multiple locations to film songs and dances for Grandparents' Day. Performances from each class from PreK3 through Middle School were compiled into a single video that audiences enjoyed watching online.

Temporary stages on the Middle School field, plaza and parking lot allowed students in third through eighth grade to perform plays safely in front of audiences. Classes also took advantage of opportunities to teach outside, where students could spread out and draw inspiration from the beautiful surroundings.

The whole-school traditions of Grandparents' Day and fine arts concerts received overhauls as well. Rather than invite crowds to campus for Grandparents' Day, Corbett Prep brought Grandparents' Day to them. Every preschool and elementary class filmed messages and songs to share with audiences virtually, using tables, benches, gymnasiums and even playground equipment as their stages for songs and dances. Middle School students sang and signed John Lennon's *Imagine*, and eighth graders continued their role as narrators in pre-recorded clips used to introduce songs.

In the spring, Specials division teachers turned the annual fine arts show into the "Specials Showcase," a full week of performances and displays. Each class had a designated time to share songs, dances and Spanish presentations with limited audiences. Afterward, students showed their guests art they had created and demonstrated their skill on technology programs used in class.

Preserving traditions and forming new ones require teachers and administrators to rethink normal routines, sometimes going to great lengths. But the extra effort pays off for students when teachers are committed to creating opportunities for students to grow in confidence, practice public speaking, develop an increased appreciation for the arts and take pride in all they accomplished.



THESPIANS SHINE IN STATE CONTEST



Corbett Prep Middle School Thespians celebrated successes at the Virtual State Thespian Festival in Spring 2021.

All of the 13 pieces Troupe 88622 submitted received excellent or superior ratings, and four won Top Honors, the equivalent of first place. Corbett Prep's presentation of *Yo, Vikings!* – selected to be showcased as a mainstage production – earned glowing reviews from Troupe directors and fellow thespians. This was the first time Corbett Prep has had a mainstage show selected for the state festival.

Corbett Prep's Top Honors recipients were *The Cast List* (scene writing), *The Play That Goes Wrong* (ensemble acting), *For Good* (duet musical) and *Gutenberg the Musical* (duet acting).

Congratulations to all members of Troupe 88622!

Athletics Update

Warrior Spirit

More than 80 percent of Middle School students participated in Corbett Prep athletics in 2020-21, a competitive program that places a high value on teamwork and sportsmanship.

Coaches encourage new players to take risks in a supportive environment, and they rely on their seasoned team veterans to demonstrate leadership.

Corbett Prep's athletic department committed to ensuring students had the opportunity to play sports in a safe environment. Students competed on 20 teams in eight sports with many students joining multiple teams.

Corbett Prep believes that every student who joins a team and makes a conscientious effort to participate should regularly take part in the team's games regardless of their skill level. Although most sports begin in Middle School, fourth and fifth graders are invited to participate in Cross Country. More than 30 elementary students ran Cross Country and contributed to first place finishes in the Florida West Coast League for Varsity Boys, Junior Varsity Boys and Junior Varsity Girls.

In addition to Cross Country, Corbett Prep offered students the chance to compete in volleyball, soccer, basketball, track and field, tennis, baseball and softball.



Teamwork, sportsmanship and helping students establish healthy, active habits are priorities of the Corbett Prep athletic department. Although most of the team sports begin in Middle School, fourth and fifth graders are invited to join the Corbett Prep Cross Country team. Coaches believe that every student who joins a team and makes a conscientious effort to participate should regularly take part in games regardless of skill level. The annual Student-Faculty Sports Challenge and Middle School Powder Puff Football Game are additional athletic opportunities to build school spirit and camaraderie among faculty and students.



LEADERSHIP LEGACY

Athletic Awards Day showcases Corbett Prep student-athletes for their achievements, dedication and leadership. Every student who participated in sports in 2020-21 was honored, and students who had gone above and beyond received special recognition.

Eighth graders who were active in the Corbett Prep athletics program for five years received a special award of recognition. These students were

- Lawson Chastain
- Keegan Clamp
- Broc Dy-Liacco
- Grace Heller
- Hank Heller
- Rohan Patel
- Jackson Reens
- Avery Rothstein
- Nicolas Smith

EARLY PRIMARY DIVISION



1. PreK4 students finish an International Baccalaureate unit on “Farm to Table” with a visit from a petting zoo.
2. The school year ends in a flourish of bubbles for PreK3 students’ class celebration.
3. Kindergarten is out of this world, especially on Space Day, when students act as astronauts at hands-on stations and explore the universe through virtual reality.
4. PreK3 students learn how people express themselves through art, emulating master artists in their own art gallery.
5. Kindergartners share their wishes for a new year with their class to get 2021 off to a great start.
6. The New Beginnings celebration lets PreK4 students strut their stuff in a performance for families.

UPPER PRIMARY DIVISION



1. Upper Primary students share their technology projects during the Specials Showcase. 2. First and second graders learn how sound travels by making phones from cans. 3. The Mighty Monkey class practices budgeting and making change in an economic activity. 4. The Brilliant Bugs begin each school year by whispering their wishes to butterflies and releasing them. 5. The Cool Cats show off their percussion, dance and vocal talents in a Grandparents' Day performance. 6. Classes read about artist Jean-Michel Basquiat and create their own street art with positive messages. 7. The Fun Run had students on their feet, celebrating healthy lifestyles and raising money for athletics.

INTERMEDIATE DIVISION



1. Fourth graders display their art projects during the Specials Showcase. 2. Third- through eighth-grade students present in the STEAM Symposium the original research they conducted on topics that interest them. 3. The fifth grade class closes the year with a traditional team challenge to build and race a cardboard boat. 4. Fifth graders enjoy a Middle School science lab during their preview of sixth grade. 5. A role-playing exercise in fourth grade helps students gain an appreciation for cultural differences. 6. The third and fourth grade All Star class gets fired up about literacy in a “book tasting.” 7. Hands-on science engages third graders when experiments yield surprising results.

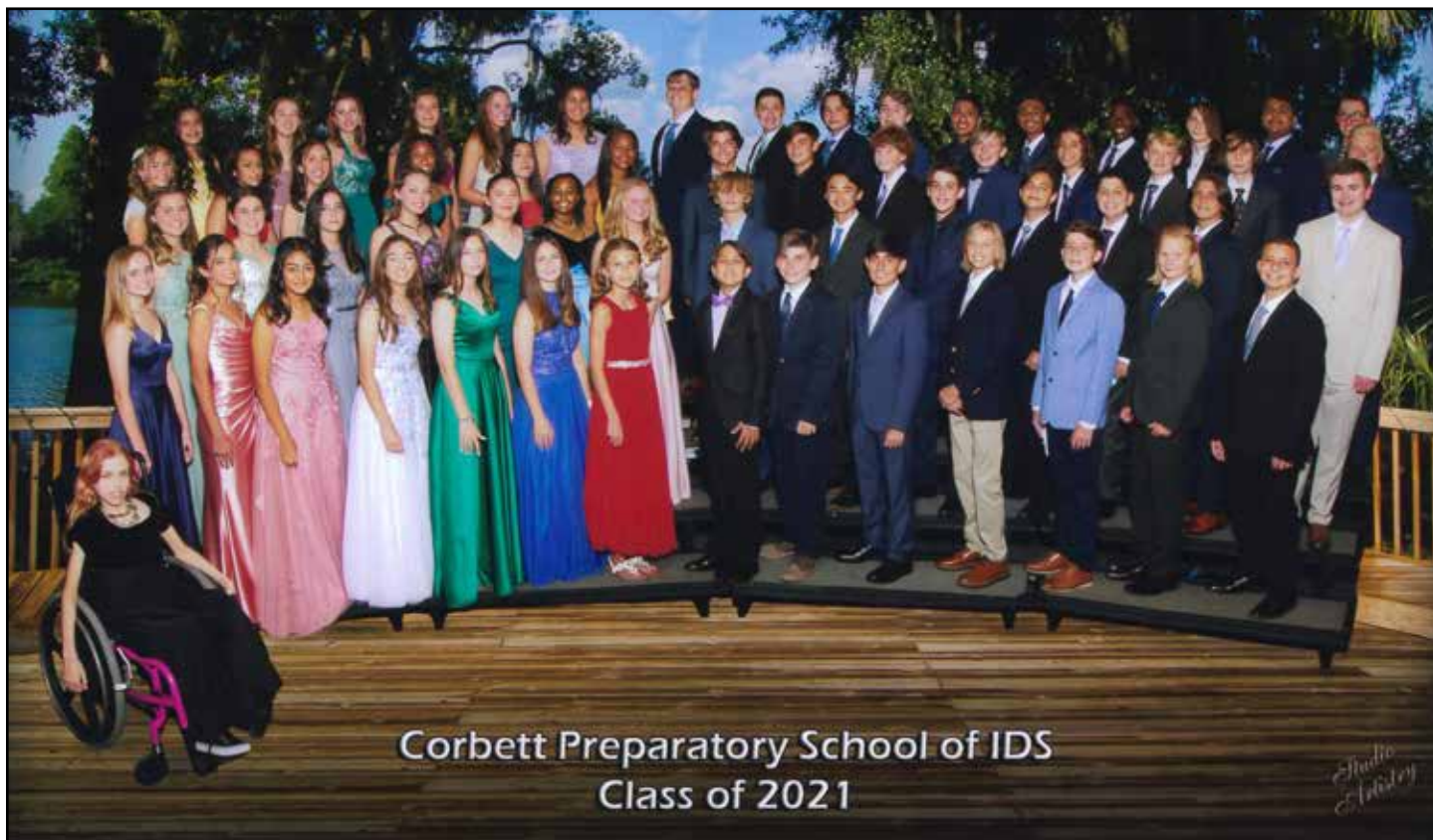
MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION



1. Eighth graders test their engineering and design skills during the annual egg drop from Raymond James Stadium. 2. The sixth grade People Fair inspires creativity as students research, write and perform monologues about influential people in history. 3. Seventh and eighth grade students make personal connections to literature when writing and reciting poems in the Poetry Coffeehouse. 4. Eighth-grade graduation is a chance to let students reflect on their time at Corbett Prep. 5. Sixth grade Social Studies students cheer on different city-states as they re-enact the Olympics in ancient Greece. 6. Seventh grade collects water samples to analyze the health of Lake Lipsey.

CORBETT PREPARATORY SCHOOL OF IDS

Class of 2021



Fifty-seven eighth-grade students graduated in 2021 from Corbett Prep. They were honored to be recruited by and accepted to many private and public schools and special programs. Their final selections included Academy of the Holy Names, Academy at the Lakes, Berkeley Preparatory School, Bishop McLaughlin High School, Calvary Christian High School, Carrollwood Day School, Gaither High School, Keystone Prep High School, Jesuit High School, Steinbrenner High School, Sunlake High School, Tampa Catholic High School, Tampa Preparatory School, and the International Baccalaureate Programmes at Alonso High School and Hillsborough High School.

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