

SEPTEMBER 15, 2023 | ISSUE 78

IN THE LOOP

Mead Hall Episcopal School



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A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Schools across the country have been contending with several challenges since the pandemic, including “learning delays, diminished mental health, and absenteeism”, according to the research of McKinsey and Company in their August 7th report, What it would take for US schools to fully recover from COVID-19?

Thankfully, as an independent school that continued in-person learning consistently after the end of the 2020 lockdown, we were much less affected by learning delays and are continuing to work to

address student academic and social issues. The first month of the school has been very rewarding for our students academically and socially in comparison with the last few years, which have been challenging. We continue to be concerned by student mental health and we are committed to putting more resources in this area, including the appointment of a full or part-time school counsellor in the 2024-2025 school year, a goal that is outlined in our Strategic Plan (below), that will require the commitment of our financial resources. We are also addressing attendance, which has been an issue for us as well, and one that affects both learning and mental health.

On absenteeism in American schools, McKinsey reports “that approximately one in three students is missing at least one day every two weeks, representing a dramatic increase in the incidence of chronic absenteeism: an estimated eight million students were chronically absent from 2018 to 2019, and early evidence shows limited signs of this trend abating.” Similarly, the Post and Courier reports: “Across the country, students have been absent at record rates since schools reopened during the pandemic. More than a quarter of students missed at least 10 percent of the 2021-22 school year, making them chronically absent, according to the most recent data available.”

At Mead Hall, we want to ensure our students are in school, learning and growing in community with each other, so we want to emphasize the importance of attendance towards that goal. Even with the wonderful support of our teachers, when students are absent they miss instruction, a strong grasp of what has been taught, and the opportunity to have the direct support of the teacher in the classroom. Another concern with absences, as pointed out by educators in the Post and Courier, is that, “they cost crucial classroom time as schools work to recover from learning setbacks” in public schools. While we are not challenged by the same learning setbacks at Mead Hall, when students are absent it does affect the teaching and learning in the classroom because teachers must direct more of their time to catching up students who have missed lessons.

Our priority is offering academic excellence to all of our students, and attendance is critical to this effort. Thank you for partnering with us to ensure our students are present each day at Mead Hall to learn and grow.

Wishing you God’s abundant blessings,

Frank Sawyer

Mead Hall Episcopal School Strategic Plan 2023 -2028

The Strategic Planning Committee shall:

- Develop, implement, monitor, assess and maintain a comprehensive Strategic Plan and a Master Campus Facility Plan.
- Develop in conjunction with the Finance Committee a related capital budget and financing plan to execute the strategic and master plan.

In performing these duties, the committee:

- Solicited input into the planning process from appropriate school resources including Board members, administrators, faculty, parents and students, via SAIS Satisfaction Survey (November 2022), and a Strategic Planning Session with stakeholders (January 2023).
- Ensured that the planning complies with SAIS accreditation requirements.

The Strategic Plan 2023-2028 addresses goals in the areas of facilities, institutional advancement, finances, school community, and curricular programs & support services.

Facilities

Goal 1: Establish a Board Facilities Committee that will review the Master Campus Facility Plan on an annual basis.

Goal 2: Increase the facilities budget to address maintenance and expansion.

Institutional Advancement:

Goal 3: Develop and implement a comprehensive financial development plan to include the Annual Fund, Capital Campaign, Mead Hall Endowment and specific needs.

Goal 4: Advance school community involvement by building stronger relationships with parents and alumni.

Finance and Budget

Goal 5: Perform a formal annual cost benefit analysis of financial resources.

Goal 6: Accelerate retirement of Aiken Prep Campus mortgages.

School Community:

Goal 7: Articulate and embody a unified school identity.

Goal 8: Recruit and retain highly qualified and diverse students with attention to critical grade transitions.

Goal 9: Recruit and retain highly qualified and diverse faculty and staff through competitive compensation, benefits, support and professional development.

Curricular Programs and Support Services:

Goal 10: Evaluate curriculum annually to ensure excellence in a transforming world.

Goal 11: Offer programs and support services to improve character development and life skills.

Goal 12: Hire a student assistance counselor to implement programs and support services for students.





LOWER SCHOOL NEWS

GUEST TEACHERS

This week, I would like to give a "shout out" to our wonderful guest teachers. Mead Hall faculty are dedicated professionals who rarely miss a day of school, but sometimes life gets messy and they have to be away. When that happens, we are so fortunate to have an exceptional group of guest teachers who step in to keep the class learning and growing. Using the well prepared lessons left by our teachers, these former educators or dedicated parents, grandparents, or retirees step in and move the class through their lessons and keep them on track with the daily routines that make up life in school.

Thank you to all of our guest teachers for your invaluable contribution to our school. If you are reading this and looking for a way to serve Mead Hall, consider becoming a guest teacher, too.

See you at school,

Joanne





IT'S A DOG'S LIFE



Each week, Winston and Snowflake come to school for a very important job - listening! Through a special reading program, students in first and second grades read to these specially trained dogs. The children love to visit the dogs and the dogs seem to enjoy the attention as well. All of the skills learned in the lower school are mastered through practice, and reading practice with a furry friend is a fun way to improve reading fluency.



LABEL IT

As the weather starts to reflect the cooler mornings and warmer afternoons that characterize South Carolina in the fall, jackets and sweaters will soon be worn to school and shed throughout the day. To save yourself money and frustration PLEASE label your children's clothes. There is a very high chance that the jacket left on the playground will make it home if it has a name in it; however a much, much lower chance that the same item will be returned to your child if it is nameless. **Note: Per uniform guidelines - we do not allow embroidered initials or names on uniform pieces.**

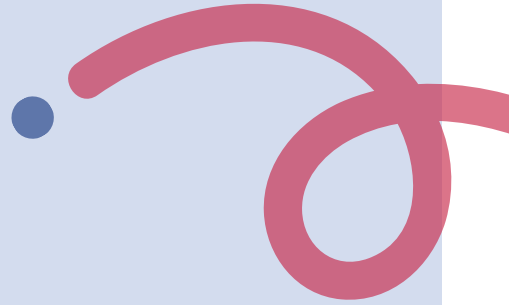


STC PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Families on the St. Thaddeus campus will have a parent/teacher conference day on Monday, October 16. **There will be no school for students in PS - 4th grades.** Teachers will share a sign-up list for time slots during the school day to schedule a conference to discuss academic and social/behavioral progress. Standardized testing results will also be discussed for third and 4th grade students. Students on the APC will have regularly scheduled classes.

SCHOOL PICTURES

School pictures will be taken on Tuesday, September 19. Students should wear their regular school uniform.





TEACHER FEATURE

Laura Jolly taught school in Edgefield County for thirty years, serving classes from 4K through second grade. She piloted several summer school programs including the 4K and 5K Peach Grant and Third Grade Recovery. She has also traveled to China, Samoa and Alaska to work with children. Mrs. Jolly left education for a time to focus on her family business and to provide care for her aging parents, but is delighted to be able to return to the classroom this year at Mead Hall! Children amaze me," she says, "Observing each child and learning their specific interests, talents and needs intrigues me." Mrs. Jolly says watching the growth and success of children is her passion.

Mrs. Jolly received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in Early Childhood Education from The University of South Carolina, although she is also a Clemson Tiger fan because of her parents and children.

LOWER SCHOOL UPCOMING DATES

SEPTEMBER

- 18-22 MAKE-UP STANDARDIZED TESTING
- 19 LOWER SCHOOL PICTURES - WILSON STUDIO
- 27 SEE YOU AT THE POLE/ PINWHEELS (PEONIES) FOR PEACE
- 27 DEADLINE TO ORDER CHID-FIL-A FOR STUDENTS
- 25-01 PTO FALL BOOK FAIR AT STC
- 29 FIELD TRIP - FOURTH GRADE TO AUGUSTA CANAL/MUSEUM

OCTOBER

- 1-31 STC SPOOKY TO BE HUNGRY
- 1 MEAD HALL SUNDAY WITH PTO PANCAKE BREAKFAST & FINAL DAY OF BOOK FAIR
- 5 FIELD TRIP 2ND GRADE TO AUDUBON RESERVE
- 5 FIELD TRIP 1ST GRADE TO RPSEC
- 5 WALK, RIDE, ROLL TO SCHOOL - 3RD/4TH GRADE EVENT (APC TO STC)
- 6 END OF QTR. 1
- 6 CHICK-FIL-A DAY
- 9-13 FALL BREAK





MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL NEWS



SOCIAL MEDIA AND CELL PHONES

As part of the ongoing video series that SCISA is requiring for students, we recently shared a video regarding social media with our students. The content focused on the benefits and dangers associated with social media. While social media does offer many benefits such as connecting with family and friends, students and adults need to be aware of the doors that social media opens for a variety of nefarious individuals and organizations.

I recently heard that Augusta, Georgia was the worst city in the state of Georgia for human trafficking! A current movie, Sound of Freedom, paints a frightening picture of just how widespread this horrendous activity truly has become. According to South Carolina Law Enforcement (SLED), there were 416 cases involving human trafficking in South Carolina in 2022. Of those cases, 399 were minors! This horrific practice is one of the fastest growing criminal activities with an estimated \$150 billion annual global industry. With these frightening numbers, it is incumbent upon all of us to educate and protect our children. Unfortunately, social media can provide predators all the information they need to recruit or stalk their prey.

Though young people may push back on limiting screen time or parental controls on devices, we can try to protect our children. As a parent myself, I know the value of establishing safe boundaries for my own children. As a gentle reminder, middle school students should **NOT** wear smartphones or have their phones visible during the school day. Having devices out is a distraction to individual students and their classmates. Unfortunately, the devices are also sometimes used for bullying other students. At Mead Hall, we are attempting to protect and educate all of our students. Thank you for partnering with us to help all of our young people maximize their potential.

Blessings,

Mike Buck`



MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL UPCOMING DATES

SEPTEMBER

- 18-22 Make-up Standardized Testing
- 20 Upper School Pictures - Wilson Studio (in Auditorium)
- 21 Senior Pictures - Wilson Studio (in Auditorium)
- 22 Homecoming Pep Rally, Volleyball Game, and High School Dance
- 27 See You at the Pole
- 25-01 PTO Fall Book Fair at STC

OCTOBER

- 1-31 STC Spooky to Be Hungry
- 1 Mead Hall Sunday with PTO Pancake Breakfast & final Day of Book Fair
- 6 End of Qtr. 1
- 6 Chick-fil-A Day
- 9-13 Fall Break - No School
- 17 PSAT (9th and 10th Grade)
- 18 PSAT (8th Grade)
- 19 PSAT (11th Grade)
- 20 Q1 Report Cards Available in FACTS

PTO NEWS

Chick-fil-A
PTO FUNDRAISER
OCTOBER 6TH
SANDWICH \$6 8 COUNT FRIED NUGGETS \$5 COOKIE \$2
NO SUBSTITUTIONS OR MODIFICATIONS TO THE MENU

HOW TO ORDER

LOG INTO **FACTS FAMILY PORTAL**
CLICK **STUDENT** FROM LEFT MENU
CLICK **LUNCH** FROM DROP DOWN MENU
CLICK **+CREATE WEB ORDER** AT TOP OF SCREEN
CLICK YOUR CHILD'S **NAME**
CLICK **LUNCH ITEMS FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6TH**
CHOOSE THE QUANTITY OF ITEMS FOR YOUR CHILD
REPEAT FOR ADDITIONAL CHILDREN
SUBMIT AND PAY FOR ORDER

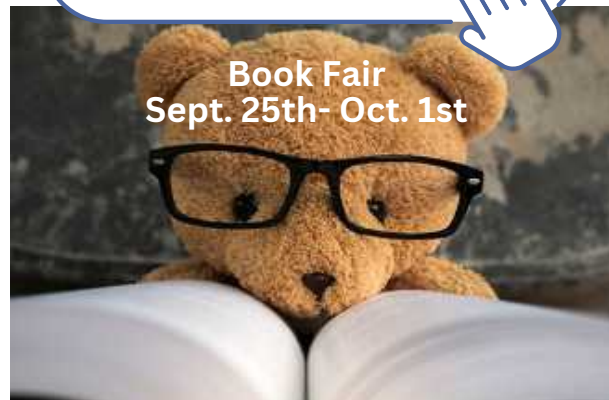
ORDER BY
SEPT. 27TH
NO LATE ORDERS

ONLINE
ORDERS
ONLY!

PTO FALL 2023 EVENT CALENDAR

- ★ September 25 - October 1 - Book Fair
- ★ October 1st - Mead Hall Sunday/ Pancake Breakfast
- October 5th - Bike to School Day for 3rd and 4th grade
- October 6th - Chick Fila Day
- October 27th Great Pumpkin Wall STC
- October 28th- Fall Festival/ MH Band Bake Sale
- November 17th - Chick Fila Day
- December 10th - Aiken Christmas Parade

[Click Here to Volunteer for the Book Fair](#)



SCHOOL STORE

School Store 9/15 - 9/22
Open: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Closed: Thursday
Afternoons by Appointment - MHStore@meadhallschool.org



Featured Item

New Water Bottles are now available at the School Store for only \$15 each. Water bottles have a flip top with straw to prevent spills!



MEAD HALL PANTHERS

ATHLETICS



Swimming

Our Swim Team had their first swim meet on Saturday September 9th at our Panther Invitational. It was Senior Day for our swimmers Robin Merritt, Peter Garrison, and Ester Marks. The meet hosted over 100 swimmers from 9 teams, some public (SCHSL) and some private (SCISA). Both the men's and the women's teams earned 1st place in the SCISA division. Women's high point winner was a tie: Caroline Johnston and Taylor Houck. Men's high point winner was Peter Garrison. New state qualifying times for this season (women) Pippa Elliott Sawyer, Ella Heath, Taylor Houck, Lucy LaLuz, and Caroline Johnston. Congrats especially to Lucy, who earned her first-ever state time this year! Peter Garrison was the only member of the men's team who earned state qualifying times this week; we have several others that are very, very close! Swimming will next compete on September 20th at Hammond Hills Suburban Club in North Augusta.



Volleyball

The Varsity Girls Volleyball team suffered a tough loss this past week against Curtis Baptist in straight sets. Our Varsity girls are now 2-3 so far this season. Cassie Rodriguez has really been doing well this past week. She is eager to learn and she shows up for practice everyday with a positive attitude. She is getting better and better with her passes and she is getting very consistent with her serve. Our girls upcoming schedule is Saturday September 16th in a tournament at Augusta Prep. The first game starts at 9:30am. Monday September 18th at CCA at 5:30pm, Tuesday September 19th at home versus the Augusta Eagles at 5:30, and Thursday September 21st at home versus Horse Creek Academy at 5:30pm.

The Middle School Girls A team picked up a victory this past week against Curtis Baptist but ended up losing their game to Tall Pines, which brings their record to 3-6. Clark Conner has been playing very consistently lately. She has a powerful serve that catches the opponents by surprise. Darla Stanley's underhand serve has brought the team back in sets where they were down. Our girls next matches are on Wednesday September 13th at Saint Marys of Aiken at 4:00pm, Thursday September 14th at Westminster of Augusta at 4:30pm, Monday September 18th at CCA at 4:30pm, Tuesday September 19th at home versus the Augusta Eagles, and Thursday September 21st at versus Horse Creek Academy. The Middle School B team is still showing some improvement every game. Unfortunately they lost their game this week against Curtis Baptist. Emma and Ally have been improving on their serving. Their upcoming games are Wednesday September 13th against Saint Marys of Aiken at 5:00pm.



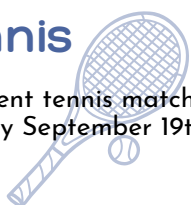
Golf

The middle school golf team was in action on Tuesday, September 12th. The Mead Hall A team defeated St. Mary's of Aiken 172 to 202 at Aiken Golf Club. Co-Medalists of the match were Everett Stanley and Graham Wilson, both with scores of 42. Zoey Meldrum shot 43 and Ford Simons and Ethan Wood both had 45.



Tennis

No recent tennis matches for our tennis team. Their next tennis match is on Monday September 18th at EDS at 4:15pm and Tuesday September 19th at Saint Marys of Aiken at the Reserve Club at 4:00pm.



Cross Country



Congratulations to our Cross Country boys team for being Runner Up at their recent meet at South Aiken Baptist. The cross country team has been working extremely hard and it's paying off. Their next meet is Friday September 15th for the middle school team at the Tall Pines meet at Generations Park at 4:30pm. Their next one is on Thursday September 21st at South Aiken Baptist at Generations Park at 5:30pm.



UPCOMING

FALL SPORTS

In other Athletic News, sign up sheets are posted in the Upper School by the cafeteria for the upcoming Fall Sports: Basketball, Archery, and Bowling.



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EUCHARIST SERVICES

Rite I Eucharist no music 7:45 AM
Rite II Eucharist with Contemporary Music 9:00 AM
Rite II Eucharist with Traditional Music 11:15 AM

Please join us for Sunday services. You may also attend virtually at the VIMEO link above. For those watching at home, the bulletin can be found by clicking [here SERVICE BULLETIN](#).

***CONFIRMATION CLASSES:** Confirmation in the Episcopal Church confirms the promises of baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Bishop Daniel Richards will preside over Confirmation Sunday at St. Thaddeus Church on Sunday, November 19. Confirmation classes will begin on September 17th and will run for six weeks. They will be held during the formation hour. To sign-up please email the church office at stthad@stthaddeus.org or drop by the church office.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND BIBLE STUDY OPTIONS

Drop In Class has resumed and we are reading
"The Echo Within: Finding Your True Calling." by Robert Benson.
Meet in the Small parlor in the Stevenson-McClelland Bldg.
Led by Kathie Fowler

Adult Sunday School Class 9:00am-9:45am - The group meets in the large Parlor
(cafeteria) in the Stevenson-McClelland Bldg.
Led by Gibert Kennedy

The Wednesday Bible Study Group has reconvened. The Group meets at 9:30
am - 10:50 am in the sitting room of the Cornish Building.
Led by Burt Tiffany

ST. THADDEUS CAMPUS 803.644.1122

AIKEN PREP CAMPUS 803.648.3223

