



THE ACADEMIC JOURNAL

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Welcome to our forty third edition of "The Academic Journal," a bimonthly bulletin in which you can read about MCA's educational philosophy, instructional methodology, and the various viewpoints and positions of our faculty, staff, students, and families.

Classical Education: Philosophy

Over the next several issues of the "Academic Journal," we will offer explanation and insights into MCA's classical education: what it is, why we choose this path, and how we pursue it with integrity. Here we discuss the philosophy. We hope you are enriched.

***F**rom our Vision: "...deepening our implementation of classical education..."*

Classical education grows from a sound and serious philosophy that encompasses a high view of human beings, of the natural world, and of the nature of learning. It is a philosophy well grounded in Western civilization, drawing from the great ideas of the past from the Hebrews and Greeks to the founders and framers of our nation.

Our anthropology determines our pedagogy: what we believe about being human determines how we teach our students. If we view our students as mere biological organisms, we can manipulate them in any way we please, using punishments and rewards to shape their behaviors. If we view our students as economic units who exist for the good of society, then we must diligently train them for their future occupations. Even if we hold a traditional view of education, then we focus on the intellect and commit to filling students with important information. If we take a higher view of human nature, the classical view, then our charge is to set our students free to be fully human in the noblest sense of the word. A high view of human nature recognizes that humans possess the capability to transcend the here and now, to hold memories, and to anticipate and plan for the future. This high view of human nature sets humans apart as beings who are self-aware and who can aspire to that which is noble. To be fully human is to engage both the intellect and the affections in the pursuit of truth, goodness and beauty. To be fully human is to focus on that which is greater than the self and to apprehend the wonder of the world, visible and invisible.

Believing in a world, both natural and transcendent, that is orderly and makes sense is another hallmark of classical philosophy. If the world is orderly and operates on consistent, unifying principles, then it benefits us to study and understand it through both rational and empirical means, through the wonders of science and the transcendent reality of mathematics. Phenomena in the natural world can be observed, measured, and quantified with the confidence that we have discovered something true about the world. The careful gathering of evidence and equally thoughtful interpretation help us to understand the world in which we live and move.

The consistent, unifying principles on which the natural world operates lead us to understand that all knowledge is connected, that there is a wholeness to learning inherent in the universe, and that the wholeness can be pursued and



known. A classical education, resting on a high view of the human, seeks to restore the wholeness of the ideas of Western civilization and to restore the wholeness of the human.

We live and move in the metanarrative, or overarching story, of the Western tradition, and each of us plays a role in the great narrative. It is this story that shapes and grounds our curriculum and our pedagogy.

Pamela J. Braley, Upper School Director

