Thoughts to Consider
A message from our Head of School, L. Shannon Graves

Enrollment

Dates to Remember

Academics, Athletics, ResLife
Our Team Leaders are sharing exciting updates for this semester and beyond!
In the spirit of Valentine’s Day and expressing appreciation towards one another, it makes me reflect on the past couple of years and how challenged our country has seemed at times due to the political climate, social angst, and the pandemic. This has created a figurative mountain of stress. Fortunately, at Vanguard, we have secluded ourselves from this unfortunate state by staying true to our core values.

Community, Leadership, Integrity, Empathy, and Resilience

We try to demonstrate compassion in everything we do and it seems to work well with our students who learn to appreciate this consistent, authentic environment and begin to trust us and then develop the confidence to be themselves. Some educators might think that they have to make a difficult choice between being empathetic or being a tough, effective teacher. This is a false dichotomy. Humane teaching is not only necessary in today’s world — it will actually help us develop the wisdom we need to succeed. Here are four ways we infuse compassion into our teaching:

- Remember the Golden Rule: Treat others the way you want or you want your children to be treated.
- Listen intently. If we can hear our students with an open mind and a willingness to learn, not only will we become wiser, we’ll also become better equipped to help our students.
- Be prepared to serve. Whenever we’re about to engage with students, take a moment to reflect on what might be going on with them. Then ask yourself: What support might they need? Be prepared to offer help.
- Stretch students to see their potential. When someone’s already doing well, you might fear that pushing them to do more could be discouraging or demotivating. Instead of shying away from these uncomfortable conversations, reframe them as an indication of true care. Challenging students to grow is ultimately an act of kindness.

Great teachers do more than just direct their students’ work, they inspire. They foster engagement and motivate them to give their best effort. Research has determined that students have three fundamental needs: to feel safe, feel a sense of belonging, and feel they matter. When these needs are met, students become empowered and engaged. We truly understand this at The Vanguard School and spend a great deal of time concentrating on it with our students.

As we approach Valentine’s Day I encourage you to follow the Golden Rule, communicate your appreciation so your loved ones feel heard, appreciated, and acknowledged. Remember, we can climb life’s mountains working together.

L. Shannon Graves
Head of School

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Since returning from Winter Break, students have enjoyed off-campus trips for brunch, paintball, an Orlando Magic basketball game, the skate park, and more! Each weekend students are contributing to the responsibilities of their boarding halls contributing to their community, and practicing executive functioning skills. This is followed by a shopping trip to buy snacks and supplies, helping them practice money management. In January, students participated in an all campus community service day focusing on campus beautification.

Upcoming on-campus events and activities including a concert and paintball. The Vanguard Games is a 3-week event modeled on the Olympics that will have student teams competing in various activities including kickball, trivia, Gaming tournaments, Tug of War, and more!

A big congratulations to the following students for earning their role as a Peer Proctor in the dorms:

(MS) Marciano
Josh S
Matthew G
Nate S
Nas
Xzaria

The roles of a proctor includes 1:1 training with staff, and sharing responsibilities such as:

- Assisting with morning wake-up duties
- Holding students in designated areas accountable for their room care responsibilities
- Helping with residential activities (weekdays and weekends)

Upcoming Prepaid trips:

- Feb 26th- Medieval Times
- Mar 4th- Top Golf
- Apr 8th- Pottery Painting
- Apr 23nd- Hollywood Studios
- May 7th- Water Park
- May 20th- Mini Golf

Reslife for Students
Jae Allen

All trips have deadlines for reservations. Please contact Rebecca Venable or Sar El-Amin to sign up a student, and Natasha Pokhai for payments.
We have added a new element to our program - the Friday Assemblies. The goal of the assemblies is to come together as a community, share information, address challenges, and celebrate victories. They also are an opportunity to teach and reinforce Vanguard’s Core Values.

During our first Term 3 assembly, our Head of School, Mr. Graves, spoke about our core value of leadership. There was a lot to unpack from his presentation, and there were two points that I would like to share. The first is that leadership starts by leading yourself, making the right decisions, and taking responsibility for your actions. It is something that we reinforce with students daily, and it was good for students to hear that these skills form the foundation of leadership. The second point was that leading others requires us to think about other people’s needs and provide support. Leadership is not about the leader’s needs; it’s about the needs of the followers. Many young people think that leadership is simply telling people what to do. There’s more to it as we adults know, and we are working to help students learn this lesson. I will note that our students were a polite, receptive, and respectful audience - as they always are - which is a good sign that they are on the path to leadership.

We have more Friday Assemblies on the schedule, and they will cover the remaining four core values and other topics, like bias. The faculty has split into workgroups to plan assemblies, and we left openings in the schedule for special guests and issues that arise that may require immediate attention. A critical goal of our work ahead is to get students to take a more prominent role in the planning and leading of assemblies. It is an excellent opportunity to get involved, hone leadership skills, and improve the Vanguard community.

According to the rating scale, Cub status is students new to the system, learning expectations, up through Leopards who are campus leaders, helping other students in Core Values. The current campus is divided by the following percentages:

**Leopards - 15%**

**Jaguars - 44%**

**Bobcats - 33%**

**Cubs - 8%**
Mental and Physical Health

Ana Pizarro

Since the return from Winter Break, I have been working with returning students on transitioning back to academics and Reslife expectations. With a wide variety of student needs, we meet students on the level of support they need, that Vanguard can provide. I have also been spending time with new students and following up with families on their child's progress.

The mental and physical health of Vanguard students is critical in their learning. They have to feel safe, and open to learning in order to get the most out of their experience at Vanguard.

We do all we can to support and advocate for students, Our community cares, and the students can find their place with friends, mentors, and making lifelong connections.

Spring Sports at Vanguard have begun. We currently have over 30 students signed up for one or more of the following athletics: community club soccer, community club swimming, tennis, track and field, and weightlifting!

Go Panthers!

Athletics

April 2nd ACT
-Sign up by 2/25

Calendar Reminders:

Spring Break:
Travel Days
March 18 & 27

WWW.VANGUARDSCHOOL.ORG
Sign-up now for more information about our 4-week boarding summer camp!
We will focus on life skills, social skills, and healthy living. Students will gain social connections and skills, through experiential learning.

Admissions

Re-enrollment and new student enrollment for the 2022-23 academic year have begun. We are working with current families and welcoming new families to The Vanguard School to provide tailored educational journeys for diverse learners. Contact us today to learn how our learning environment may be the right fit for building confidence, leadership, and lifelong opportunities in your child.

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about the Vanguard community, please visit our website at www.vanguardschool.org and use the "Inquire and Apply" button, or schedule a call via email to learn more at admissions@vanguardschool.org.

Follow this code to visit our website and send an inquiry!