As you enter the room, take a moment to read the poems posted on the walls. You may choose to read some or all of the poems. As you read, pick out words or phrases from these selections that stand out to you and make a note of them.

**Invitation**

**Leader:**
We gather as a mindful community of inquiry.

**People:**
O God open our hearts and minds.

**Poetry**

Please share just a word or phrase that spoke to you from the poetry on the walls.
COI Institutes: Desired Outcomes

- Deepening understanding of the "Community of Inquiry" model
- Increased commitment to contemplative practice as a foundation for leadership
- Increased willingness to lean into areas of challenge and growth, personally and organizationally
- Deepening true community among faculty, staff, and admin
- Engaging participants in meaningful and relevant conversation about the general application of these approaches and principles in their teaching and work
- Experience hands-on application of activities that model best practices in “Community of Inquiry” model
- Broaden toolkit of teaching practices that support active learning and deep thinking

The Five Pillars of Episcopal Identity

1. Living, Shared Vision Over Doctrine
2. Focus on Relationships
3. Commitment to Contemplative Practice
4. Sensitivity to the Problematic
5. Servant Leadership

1. Living, Shared Vision Over Doctrine

- Wars fought, and families and countries torn apart, over doctrine during Protestant Reformation (and many other times in history)
- Anglicanism does not possess an agreed-upon confession of faith, founding theologian, or central religious authority
- Cognitional Theory (Lonergan)
- Skepticism and humility around “mental models” (Senge)
- ACTIVITIES:
  - Brainstorming personal visions for the school
  - Searching for common threads and action steps
  - Engaging the waterwheel
2. Focus on Relationships

- In the absence of a central authority or established doctrine, the Anglican Communion has developed “instruments of communion” and “bonds of affection”
- *The Social Neuroscience of Education* by Louis Cozolino: student’s relationship to teacher is crucial
- Conversational leadership (David Whyte)
- Deeply vulnerable to being influenced by the others (Brene Brown)
- ACTIVITIES:
  - Council, Open Session, Harkness, Essential Questions

3. Commitment to Contemplative Practice

- A very strong contemplative tradition in medieval Christianity
- In times of danger the “inner pilgrimage” becomes more important
- Spirituality is about openness to transcendence
- ACTIVITIES:
  - Sample daily activities from the Tree of Contemplative Practice (meditation, Qigong, journaling, chanting, mindfulness)
  - Activities like Council and Quaker Share are also both contemplative and relational
  - Student led conferences and portfolios focus on student reflection

Tree of Contemplative Practice

4. Sensitivity to the Problematic

- The Episcopal Church has become one of the boldest (and some would say most conflicted!) religious bodies in the world
- Among the first churches to ordain women, gays, and lesbians
- M. Scott Peck: Pseudocommunity, chaos, emptiness, and true community
- Diversity and Inclusion work: lean into discomfort
- ACTIVITIES:
  - Practice having difficult conversations in pairs
  - “Where is this community in terms of Peck’s model?”
  - Diversity & Inclusion activities such as One Up - One Down and Implicit bias tests & discussion
  - Discussions of school culture: how do we identify and improve upon weaknesses in the program?
4. Sensitivity to the Problematic

1) “Total Participation Techniques: Making Every Student and Active Learner” By Himmele and Himmele
   - True/Not True
   - Categorizing and Sorting
   - Ranking
   - Three 3s

2) Accountable Talk Practices: One of the principles of learning from the Institute for Learning, University of Pittsburgh.
   - Accountability to the Learning Community, to Accurate Knowledge, to Rigorous Thinking

5. Servant Leadership

- The New Testament, particularly in the epistles, talks about deacons, priests, and bishops - very hierarchical!
- And yet Jesus, “though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (Philippians 2:6-7)
- “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant” (Matthew 20:26)
- Servant first, leader second (Greenleaf)
- ACTIVITIES:
  - Exercises relating to the 10 principles of servant leadership from the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership

Community of Inquiry

- Education as deep inquiry rather than rote memorization or a ticket to college or upper-middle class life
- Inquiry is a communal as well as solitary affair
- The five pillars taken together work towards self-transcendence, of individuals and the community
- Leader serves the community by pursuing personal mastery (Senge)

Council:
The Practice of Listening and Speaking from the Heart

- Based on the universal tradition of telling our stories
- Builds trust and helps create safe and caring environments for the community

Rules:
1. Listen from the heart
2. Speak from the heart
3. Be spontaneous
4. Be lean
Council:
The Practice of Listening and Speaking from the Heart

Process:
- Dedication
- Sound
- Movement Mirror
- Say one word or phrase that capture the spirit of inquiry
- What is the hardest thing about implementing COI at your school?
- What might be the best thing about implementing COI at your school?
- What is a story from this conference you will take with you?
- Witness round
- What is one thing you are looking forward to promoting when you get back to your school?
- Closing: Funny Faces

Questions?
Living into Episcopal Identity

If Columbia professor Andrew Delbanco is right that “the most striking feature of contemporary culture is the unslaked craving for transcendence,” then Episcopal schools have a huge target market. Yet many prospective applicants (particularly in places like Hollywood, where I work) assume that faith-based schools impose overly rigid values on children rather than slaking their thirst for meaning; or, if the parents want the school to be faith-based, they may question whether ours is the right faith. That marketing challenge may be why many of us seem to downplay our religious affiliation by referring in our mission statements only to a history or tradition of Episcopal affiliation, rather than to a living, dynamic presence.

The real problem with downplaying our Episcopal identity is that it deprives us of our greatest strengths as learning institutions. The charisms of the Anglican-Episcopal religious movement lend themselves perfectly to both the educational challenges of the twenty-first century and to contemporary culture’s hunger for deeper meaning and purpose. Living out those gifts in our schools requires that we extend Episcopal values beyond chapel and religious education to such core institutional practices as the way in which we structure our academic programs and the ways that we organize ourselves as communities.

To help make this point, I offer here a list of five gifts or values from our Episcopal heritage and their implications for curriculum and organizational development:

I. An ongoing preference for living vision over ideology

In Episcopal schools, we operate from “a scepticism [sic] about formulae and dogma that is fundamentally scepticism about the capacities of the human mind.” Paradoxically, we may find that such humility concerning limited human knowing opens us to ever greater wisdom and understanding, both in traditional academic subject areas and in our life together as a community.

To believe that one already possesses wisdom “is to arrest a process in which God is actively causing you to grow.” To live out such a faith is not to reject tradition, “but to turn the soil of tradition,” to return to “the created spirit…its lost freedom.”2 We search, we inquire, we explore, we question, precisely in order to honor that spirit within ever calling us to grow, to learn, to transcend limited understandings (and all human understandings are limited).

Yet our goal is not a lonely skepticism, but a living, shared vision of the kind that informs all great human achievements. That’s why our gatherings often include

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2 Excerpts are from Rowan Williams, *Anglican Identities* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 2003), pp. 76-83.
liturgy: instead of one of us “having the last word,” we point together ritually towards a powerful but still mysterious broader truth.

II. A focus on relationships, among both people and ideas

The Anglican Church seeks to build shared understanding through “instruments of communion” and “bonds of affection.” Likewise, our constant talk about community in our schools is evidence of a deeper understanding about the cosmos and knowledge: it’s all about connections, relationships, and conversation. This emphasis on connections and relationships serves as a counterpoint to the rugged individualism of our culture and distinguishes Episcopal schools in particular from other “college prep” schools.

We need to make sure that we allow time for teachers to plan and map curriculum together, and for students to collaborate in teams. As teachers, administrators, students, and parents build meaningful relationships with one another, they lay the groundwork for grappling in a sophisticated way with the shared complexities that characterize the twenty-first century landscape.

When it comes to pedagogy, Episcopal schools should particularly emphasize and develop the art of dialogue, an approach to teaching and learning that incorporates all the other values we discuss here. There will always be a time and place for lectures, particular in high school, but only as one modality among others with a primary emphasis on building relationships.

Dialogue occurs when each of the participants in the classroom or meeting “really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relationship between himself and them.” Dialogue occurs when all participants cease merely advocating for their own positions and become truly and deeply open to being influenced by others.

We may think of dialogue as Martin Buber describes it as too philosophical and impractical to implement in our schools, or at least in some subjects, but there has developed a wealth of relevant practical advice through the modern field of learning organizational theory and the work of educators such as Matthew Lipman, founder of the Philosophy for Children program. What I am calling “dialogue” here is probably very similar to skills already highlighted in many of our classes and programs, from circle time in kindergarten to discussions in Socratic seminars.

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4 http://cehs.montclair.edu/academic/iapc/
III. A commitment to contemplative practice

Episcopal education is “inquiry into what is most meaningful to us as interconnected human beings.”⁵ Such inquiry is at core a contemplative practice, requiring habits of focused disengagement from distractions and openness to transformative insight. Mindfulness meditation, prayer, and other specific contemplative practices should be taught from the early years on. There is now a significant body of research supporting the benefits of mindfulness for mental and physical health and academic achievement.⁶

Specific instruction in mindfulness meditation and other spiritual and contemplative practices⁷ is important for its own sake and also to lay the foundation for everything we do in our schools. Each academic subject teaches, along with content, a specific method of inquiry that requires focus and discipline. Service learning is best understood as an “activist contemplative practice.”⁸ Furthermore, every student is tasked, implicitly or explicitly, with pulling all the curricular and co-curricular strands together in her or his own life story. That life story may gain depth and power, akin to the powerful Judeo-Christian biblical stories we hear in chapel, with practices that open students’ hearts and minds to the widest possible horizons of meaning and achievement. We are called over and over again, in the biblical stories, to be open to transcendence.

Talk of contemplative practice can sound grand or esoteric, but it all begins very simply and concretely with introduction to practice at every age level. And students are led in contemplative practices most effectively by adults who practice themselves.

IV. A sensitivity to what is problematic

M. Scott Peck recognized that many self-proclaimed “communities” are actually “pseudo-communities” in which the appearance of harmony, peace, and agreement is more important than the pursuit of truth. I find that outsiders who know the Episcopal Church only through news stories about our struggles still admire our willingness to face controversial issues unflinchingly – a perception about our “brand” that we can build on. In our schools, we must not allow the appearance of community to become a false idol that prevents us from addressing the tough questions that will help us become better communities in fact.

Likewise in our classrooms,

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⁵ “The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society,” http://www.contemplativemind.org/about/vision
⁶ L.A.’s own UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC) is on one of the international leaders in mindfulness research and instruction; see http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=18
⁷ For example, see http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree
⁸ From the website of the Center for Contemplation and Action (CAC): “We believed that action and contemplation, once thought of as mutually exclusive, must be brought together or neither one would make sense.” https://cac.org/about-cac/history
Teachers may ask questions and students may answer them without either party feeling the least twinge of doubt or puzzlement and with hardly any real thinking taking place, because the process is mechanical…. On the other hand, there are times when inquiry begins because what has been encountered – some aberration, some discrepancy, something that defies being taken for granted – captures our interest and demands our reflection and investigation. If, then, thinking in the classroom is considered desirable, the curriculum cannot present itself as clear and settled, for this paralyzes thought. The curriculum should bring out aspects of the subject matter that are unsettled and problematic in order to capture the laggard attention of the students and to stimulate them to form a community of inquiry.  

Lesson planning that makes room for that which is “unsettled and problematic” is much more difficult than planning lessons that march predictably through entirely “clear and settled” information; so, too, a school that wishes to become more of a true learning community devotes time to developing this skill.

At the same time, we are also different from schools that value only “project-based” learning or schools that demand that all learning connect to “essential questions.” We recognize that not all of teaching and discussion needs to concern problematic material. Much of community life in our schools involves rituals and routines, and that’s fine. Some of our teaching requires rote learning, and that’s fine, too, as long as there’s enough other material that “defies being taken for granted.” The Anglican approach is always a balanced approach.

V. A commitment to servant leadership

As its name suggests, the Episcopal Church has bishops; this leadership structure distinguishes it from, for example, the Society of Friends; Episcopal schools are correspondingly different from Quaker schools with their strong emphasis on consensus.

In Episcopal schools, “hierarchy” is not a bad word because leadership is held to very high standards of accountability. Our schools seek leaders who appear most capable of developing and articulating good decisions on behalf of the community. Of course, hierarchy can become problematic when it flies in the face of building shared vision, giving voice to divergent viewpoints, and failing to suspend advocacy in order to listen carefully. There’s no question that our schools, and our world, require strong leaders who prevent decision-making from getting bogged down by controversy and obstinacy. Illegitimate hierarchies result when school leaders have poor judgment but throw their weight around anyway. Ineffective hierarchies result when the terror of making a bad decision or fear of making

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9 Lipman, p. 21.
faculty or parents angry leads administrators to avoid controversial decisions altogether.

In Episcopal schools, those without official leadership positions – including virtually all students – are not powerless, but are called to voice their input and concerns civilly to those with official authority, who are then called to listen carefully and respond appropriately as servant leaders.

Everyone in the school should be held accountable, but leaders more so because with authority also comes responsibility to use power wisely. Ideally, leadership training in our schools emphasizes these points.

Together these values, each derived from and integral to a shared Episcopal heritage, may help our schools live into their calling as self-transcending institutions, or what at Campbell Hall we call communities of inquiry. Such learning, developing, vibrant schools cannot help but be the most profoundly satisfying and effective places for students to learn and for adults to work and volunteer. Building such schools allows us Episcopal educators to live into our baptismal covenant while simultaneously offering something of real value to the broad educational market.