

## **Our Common Purpose**

With a resolute commitment to the words on our Seal - Knowledge, Vision, and Integrity - we, the Montclair Kimberley Academy community, declare and confirm OUR COMMON PURPOSE of intellectual and personal fulfillment for our students, faculty, parents, alumni, Trustees, and for all others we serve at our three campuses.

We strive to be an affirming community of learners that encourages students to take themselves seriously as persons and to recognize and take responsibility for their education. To understand this point, one must read the exhortation to students by William Avery Barras, who taught English for thirty years at Montclair Academy. He said to his students, "If what I am saying goes over your head, raise your head." In a similar fashion, we will encourage our community to raise its head to meet the standards set forth. These are convictions and attitudes of which great schools are made.

We are an independent, co-educational day school located on three campuses, each with its own character. We are linked to strong traditions dating from 1887: vision; persistence; dedication among students, parents, faculty, and administrators; and the formation of trustworthy habits. Our co-educational, college-preparatory program must provide a challenging and coherent liberal arts education from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Such an education aspires to prepare students for full active citizenship: young men and women who understand the philosophical underpinnings of their government and who are capable of independent ideas, artistic appreciation, and social responsibility. We will not allow the rights and privileges accorded to citizens of this nation to slip away because our students are ill-equipped for citizenship and for thoughtful participation in the family and community.

Our primary goal is to graduate young men and women who love learning, who acquire knowledge of fundamental subject matter and the power of learning, and who are well-prepared to select and meet successfully the demands of a sound university curriculum. We aspire to the ideals that our students will understand the difference between ornamental knowledge and knowledge that is felt with conviction and used well, and that they will acquire the necessary academic and work habits. We aspire to the goal that our students make intelligent life choices with a warranted self-confidence and intellectual humility and prize such ethical principles as integrity, wholesome friendship, and individual and community responsibilities.

We prepare students of Montclair Kimberley Academy for an expected range of educational opportunities, life experiences, and responsibility. We embrace the classical ideal of the educated individual who cultivates and acquires a thorough grounding in the arts and sciences. In addition we strive to advance our students through a wide variety of distinctive classroom and non-classroom experiences. We dedicate ourselves to enhancing the students' learning by helping them to

understand how integration of the disciplines deepens their understanding and knowledge.

We are entrusted with the responsibility to guarantee that our students acquire basic study skills and the ability to grasp content so that they become active learners with the ability to identify problems and to work creatively toward solutions. The essential activities of the life of the mind, such as judgment and problem solving, reading, writing, speaking, observing, and listening, remembering, and critical appraisal, must receive scrupulous attention from the faculty in the classroom and articulated throughout the three campuses.

We believe that effective education encourages students to recognize and use their particular abilities, to show flexibility in changing circumstances, and to display the courage and ability to recognize their very human weaknesses and to see these as opportunities to seek the help of others - and not to give up. We appreciate the value of the study of and exposure to multiple perspectives and the importance of our students' abilities to form reasoned opinions and the capacity for empathy.

We recognize that students learn in a variety of ways, and we encourage the use of diverse and appropriate teaching styles including lecture, cooperative learning, dialogue, and independent study. We strive to foster a lively and productive ethos in which teachers and students develop a relationship of trust as their best efforts are drawn out both intellectually and personally, engage in stimulating dialogue, and are encouraged to take intellectual and creative risks.

We are convinced that our school community must challenge the total person, and therefore we provide a broad range of opportunities beyond the classroom. The rich resources of the Greater New York metropolitan area and other educational opportunities off-campus and overseas offer our students and faculty special advantages in the study of primary documents, art, and historical cultural settings. We encourage students to participate in co-curricular and community-service programs that provide opportunities to develop a variety of talents, to inculcate sensitivity to the needs of others, to pursue their interests, and to broaden personal horizons. Participation in drama productions and in lifetime and competitive sports is encouraged. We believe that all these activities contribute significantly to our students' physical wellbeing, to their ability to work effectively in groups to their ability to manage time well, and to their ability to develop team spirit, while fostering a healthy desire to excel.

We obligate ourselves always to review, strengthen, and expand our personal guidance system that helps each student on an almost - daily basis to recognize strengths, realize potential, choice options for the future, develop an increasing personal independence, and use the school's resources to maximum advantage. Under the guidance of faculty advisors, student-to-student programs help to develop responsibility for the school community. Our basic expectation is to share work with parents who are the first and most important educators of their children.

We commit ourselves to achieving and sustaining our high academic standards by appointing and retaining exceptionally talented faculty who capitalize on the benefits of small class size and provide a challenging and supportive learning environment. These faculty members dedicate themselves to the advancement of their own learning and to the cultivation of their own character, for they bear witness to the ideals they have dedicated themselves to promote in others. We are committed to providing our faculty with powerful technology to use as a learning supplement in their classrooms and to assist their students to retrieve and use information effectively.

We cherish persons in their individuality. We believe that in the richness of our differences, there is strength and opportunity. We know that by recognizing differences, we are bound to have a richer, more joyful, and stimulating school. We value the contributions of each individual. In spirit and activity, policy and program, each person bears the responsibility to work towards a harmonious environment where individual strength of character develops. At the same time, we celebrate the common humanity and heritage that unite us.

We accept the challenges of those who urge us to remember the words of our Seal - Knowledge, Vision, Integrity - that echo prominently in our school song. Knowledge can be acquired by our students by working very hard over long periods of time. In acquiring knowledge, we remember that it is often true that many important things to be learned are neither exciting nor entertaining. Without vision, we are adrift. OUR COMMON PURPOSE is our compass. We remember that for us and for our students to have integrity, we must make life in the classroom and life in the rest of our school whole, informed by high principles that apply throughout. For our students to have integrity, it takes the companionship of adults in whom integrity is an obvious fact of daily life in both their public and private lives. Combined, our knowledge and vision allow us to develop and maintain our integrity, the cornerstone of OUR COMMON PURPOSE.

We, the Montclair Kimberley Academy community, understand that the fulfillment of OUR COMMON PURPOSE will require us to forge an institutional coherence and to be open to meaningful change. We hold that responsibility for keeping OUR COMMON PURPOSE fresh and alive falls upon each member of the community. We pledge our commitment to this COMMON PURPOSE because in it lies our best hope for the future of our children and our school.