We feel a great urgency—and obligation—to create a Center for Civic Engagement at Georgetown Day School at this moment in time for our country. With a growing inability to sustain dialogue across our cultural and political differences, and with long-standing issues of race and economic equity in America still unresolved, an existential question for our country right now is this: How do we educate young people to believe and participate in our democracy so that they can make the ideals of liberty, equality, and justice stronger now and for our collective future?

We are focused on four pillars to anchor The Center’s work:

- **Dialogue.** Constructive communication across lines of difference is the foundation of a civil democracy. We will be creating programs that explicitly teach dialogue, bring young people into conversation about their ideological differences, and deepen an understanding of our collective humanity.

- **Equity.** Systemic inequities—particularly those along racial or socioeconomic lines—threaten the health and sustainability of American democracy, so we must work to eradicate them. Defining goals for greater equity of outcomes will be central to each initiative we pursue.

- **Experiential learning.** Learning by doing builds enduring skills and brings young people into direct engagement with others, fostering a bias toward collective action that they can apply to future endeavors. Experiential learning is the modality in which our programs will operate, creating points of access to other young people, as well as content experts, practitioners, and community activists, to build collaborative networks for social change.

- **Partnerships.** We are most effective when we partner with others who share our social impact goals. The Center will be intentional about partnerships that bring new or underrepresented voices to the table in the service of greater equity of outcomes in our partner communities.

The Center for Civic Engagement is a contribution to the cause of teaching and inspiring young people to claim a stake in the future of our democracy that is powered by their participation, advocacy, and action. +
Eastside Prep’s Director of Enrollment Management, Cheryl Schenk Miller, reflected on their successful, virtual admission year by evaluating the new elements that were fruitful enough to be kept in their enrollment toolbox. Miller attributes their success to the thought and energy put into helping families fully understand the school “vibe” and culture—the intangibles of the school experience. Community panels were a key part of this achievement.

These panels included topics such as well-being, service and equity/inclusion, financial aid, fine and performing arts, technology, and athletics. The panels brought students, administrators, and teachers together to share stories about the school and their experiences. Families observed the interplay between the faculty and staff, not just as a scripted presentation but as conversations where people were authentic. Perhaps most importantly, the sessions’ Q&As included the option to ask questions anonymously, allowing families the freedom to ask uncomfortable questions.

Ultimately, Miller feels it is important to meet families where they are by delivering programs and interviews virtually, providing access to information through live question and answer sessions, and by sharing the authenticity of the school community.

Eastside Catholic’s Assistant Director of Admissions Steve Rudolf attributes their success to personal connections made through storytelling, a customized experience for each family, and fostering one-on-one connections between prospective and current EC families.

With a diverse range of applicants—both in learning styles and family backgrounds—the Admissions Team enabled prospective families to see the school through the eyes and experiences of a family similar to their own. These invaluable connections were achieved through Eastside Catholic’s long-standing Parent-to-Parent program. Usually held in person, the program was reimagined virtually, allowing organic connections to develop as current parents enthusiastically shared their unique insight and stories about their student’s EC experience. Parent-to-Parent gatherings have proven key to helping families feel confident in their ability to develop future community relationships.

Director of Admissions Anastasia Bennett said the team found ways to personally connect by meeting the needs of each unique family. From monthly virtual topic sessions to one-on-one meetings with a principal to personalized live or virtual tours, families were able to customize their admissions experience based on their availability and comfort level.
2021 PREDICTIONS FROM OUR PODCAST GUESTS

A NOTE FROM HANS MUNDAHL, EMA DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the gifts of producing a podcast for EMA is we get to have remarkable conversations with thought leaders and luminaries. When we looked back at 2020, we were blown away by all of the great interviews, conversations, deep dives, and thoughtful opportunities for reflection we’d had. So many folks were so generous with their time, insight, and passion. So we reached out to our guests from 2020 and asked them to make a prediction for 2021. We were blown away by the response. What do you think? What will you keep from 2020? What are you looking forward to changing? Use the Voice Memo app on your phone to record your prediction and we’ll play it on the show. Thanks for being a part of our audience and our community, and I hope you have the chance to be creative today.

Through hardship will come the opportunity for innovation and change

➤ GREG MARTIN
Humanities Chair at Vermont Academy (VT)
Disruptions in higher ed will allow for innovation in K–12.

➤ JOHN BARRENGOS
Director of Admission and Financial Aid, Putney School (VT)
We’ll see more civility in the public square and more clarity in our independent school identity.

Schools will get better

➤ KEVIN PLUMMER
Head of School, Tampa Preparatory School (FL)
Independent schools will use lessons from 2020 to become better places.

➤ KRISTEN MARIOTTI
Head of Enrollment Management, Emma Willard School (NY)
We’ll serve students better and improve equity, inclusion, and access.

Schools will develop specific programs to meet family needs

➤ SUSAN EMERY
Director of Enrollment Management, Kingswood Oxford School (CT)
We’ll see more startup schools enter the market.

➤ SUZANNE WALKER BUCK
Head of School, Western Reserve Academy (OH)
More families will be seeking repeat years and will value in-person instruction.

Independent schools will learn the financial lessons from 2020

➤ ARI BETOF
Cofounder and Partner, Mission & Data (PA)
Schools will be more financially sustainable.

➤ KEVIN FOLAN
Head of School, Providence Country Day (RI)
Partnerships and innovation will continue to drive price and value proposition conversations.

We’re all tired but we’ll grow

➤ NICOLE OAKES
Director of the International Student Program, Oaks Christian School (CA)
We’ll focus on additional mental fitness and grow through change.

➤ TIM FISH
Chief Innovation Officer, National Association of Independent Schools (DC)
We’ll be tired but we’ll rise to the occasion and we’ll be in-person in fall 2021.

There is reason to have hope for 2021

➤ KELLY PAGE
Director, Bennett Labs (IL)
We’ll listen to our educators more.

➤ DAVID WILLOWS
Director of Advancement, International School of Brussels (Belgium)
Hope will appear on the horizon.