

2016-17 Head of School Report

Despite any transition that John Milledge Academy has experienced this year, we remain strong. Our enrollment is up; our academic scores are nationally competitive; our athletic teams are champions. We continue to promote the traditions that our school was founded on, while looking for innovative ways to inspire our scholars and prepare them for the challenges they will face in the future.

I am pleased to report that we currently have 510 students enrolled. This is outstanding for our 500 student 2016-17 budget. I would like to thank the Board of Trustees for their support and patience this year. I would also like to thank our amazing faculty and staff whose unwavering dedication to our students is obvious every day as they...

... partner with parents to develop the abilities and interests of every student through challenging curriculums and extracurricular opportunities that focus on critical and creative thinking, strong communication skills, leadership and team development, lifelong learning, and service to others.

John Milledge Academy's accreditation status is strong as we continue our 45th year with the Georgia Accrediting Commission, our third year of membership with the National Association of Independent Schools and our third year of compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Southern Association of Independent Schools.

In just twenty-four months, we will participate in our next compliance visit with SACS/SAIS. This is a vital part in growing a school. Our accreditation forces us to look at *who we are* and *who we want to be*. This will allow us time to evaluate our mission, our policies and procedures, and our five-year plan for fortifying academics, facilities, and finances. An expanded Lower School playground? An outdoor education facility? New bleachers on the football field? Extended asphalt parking? A new Upper School building? We plan on dreaming big!

We are thankful for the supporters who believe in our big dreams. I hope you received a Loyalty Letter this past December; I had an outstanding response to the simple, \$100 ask...raising over \$10,325 so far.

These donations will be applied to many places in our school, to make sure we are continually growing successful graduates. At John Milledge Academy, we are committed to graduating men and women who:

- Think deeply, critically, logically, creatively, and prayerfully to solve problems;
- Evaluate and reflect on information independently;
- Thirst to acquire new knowledge continually and work for success;
- Possess the ability to write clearly, speak proficiently, communicate effectively, express opinions, and read with comprehension;
- Strive to be a leader in our community as a kind, thoughtful, positive, honest and patriotic citizen;
- Accept responsibility and demonstrate accountability for their work and actions;
- Participate confidently in academics and arts as a life-long learner;
- Cultivate habits of worship, discipline, servitude, discernment, and self-reflection;
- Respect cultures and beliefs not their own;
- Persevere in competition regardless of the arena, with honor in defeat.

In 2016-17, JMA Upper School students have succeeded like never before. We had not one – not two – but three near perfect scores on the SAT. We have 54 Sophomore, Junior, and Senior students in our Advanced Placement Program, scattered across 7 AP classes, prepared to take 68 exams. We currently have a 60% pass rate on AP tests. In 2016, we have 3 National AP Scholars (students passing multiple tests with a 3/5) and 1 National AP Scholar with Honors (students passing multiple tests with a 4/5). The average GPA in the Upper School is a 3.41 – UGA's (with a moderately difficult acceptance rate) has an average entering Freshman GPA of a 2.91. Even with this rigor, $\frac{3}{4}$ of our Upper School student body earned the Head of School or Honor Roll award at the end of the first semester. As a shining example of John Milledge Academy, this year's STAR student is Simran Brar & her STAR teacher is Mr. David Gallagher.

We have 44 Juniors and Seniors taking Dual Enrollment classes at Central Georgia Tech, GMC, and Georgia College – this is approximately 40% of our Juniors and Seniors. This year, our students will earn an outstanding 152 college credits.

The class of 2017 has applied and have been accepted to a wide variety of schools: University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, North Georgia, Georgia Southern, Belmont University, Perdue University, Auburn University, University of South Carolina, University of Tennessee, Santa Barbara City College,

Middle School students are also nationally competitive, as shown by the data provided by the ACT Aspire. This data has provided new insights as to where our Middle School Students are strong and areas that need improvement. In many subjects, we are less than 4 points from the National Average. JMA is using data to drive our mission as we make curriculum decisions. JMA choses to set the academic bar for our students at the national level to give them the best competitive edge possible. At the end of Semester 1 we had 40% of our Middle School students achieve Honor Roll and just 16% students reach the Head of School List. Middle School years are a tough transition!

We begin growing our graduates young. Our Lower School offers a safe, interactive, and nurturing environment for our pre-kindergarten through 5th grade students. By adding character education, STEM classes, and a 4th-5th grade Junior Beta – we are breaking new ground. We have also expanded our Instructional Support program to include our Lower School. We hope to continue growing this invaluable resource next year with the hiring of a full-time teacher dedicated to making our students successful.

Personnel additions within our faculty and staff continue to raise the standards each year in our academics. The new faculty members to join this year are no exception; Mrs. Daphne Epps, 5th grade; Mrs. Karen Rubino, IS Tutor and Drama Community Coach; Mrs. Amber Burgamy, AP Government.

We continue to answer our mission as **Athletics** provides us a venue in which *team development* can be taught as well provide positive *extracurricular opportunities* for our students. This year continues to uphold the John Milledge strong tradition of winning:

- By the end of the year, we will award 39 or more students as Scholar Athletes (play one or more Varsity sport while maintaining a 93% cumulative academic average);
- Region winning and State Runner-up Varsity Softball Team;
- Region winning, State Champion and undefeated Varsity Football Team;
- State Runners-up Competition Cheerleading Team;
- Third place winners and first State Champion in Varsity Wrestling;

- Region winning Boys Varsity Basketball Team.

Thus far, we have two student-athletes sign to play college football. Noah Lavender will play next fall for GMC and Mike Francis will be playing for Santa Barbara Community College.

The *creative thinking* portion of our mission is not just used in the classroom. It is also a fundamental part of our **Fine Art's** program. With a new drama teacher on board, we are excited about the Upper School presenting a spring play. Our Lower School music program provides a Select 3rd – 5th grade Chorus that offers students musical experience. Our Lower School, Middle School, and Upper School art programs continue to thrive with the leadership of our Art Department. The after school art program is always a huge hit with students, too.

JMA continues to answer what our mission charges us to do with active **service** to others. In conjunction with the PTO, the Lower School raised \$1,659 (resulting in many teachers kissing a goat!) for Love for Haiti in October. Many Lower School classes participated in Christmas projects, too, on top of collecting millions of pull tabs and Box Tops. The National Honor Society had a record setting blood drive in January, involving the whole community. The school has worked to collect stuffed animals for hospitalized veterans for Valentine's Day, and everyone is gearing up for our GCSU sponsored Mini-Dance Marathon on Friday in support of the Children's Hospital of Macon. Each year, 6-8 Upper School students earn the Presidential Service Award, volunteering 100 or more hours each year.

I was sharing with a prospective new family this past week about all the good things that John Milledge Academy has to offer. When I talk about JMA I always find my story intertwining with the school's story. Thirteen years ago, John Milledge became my home. I feel like I've raised generations of students here – have now hired them as alumni or are teaching *their* kids. Most importantly, my student is here and I have a vested interest in his entrance to Harvard in ten years or so (no pressure, Marshall!). We have so much to be proud of. My heart swells each morning as I drive on campus. It echoes our flags: Tradition, Pride, Excellence, Leadership, and Character. It echoes our foundation in Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and he will not depart from it."

Leading with a Trojan's spirit and a servant's heart,

Jessica Jones, Interim Head of School