

# A Home for the Arts

Last year, Saint George’s School received a very generous gift pledge of one million dollars from a donor who would like to remain anonymous at this time. This remarkable gift signifies strong support for the school and is meant to sustain SGS into the future. The donor’s vision includes:

1. Support long term infrastructure and facilities improvement;
2. Create community;
3. Develop a philanthropic culture of support for Saint George’s.

The board and administration, working with the donor, have agreed to move forward with a building project to replace the existing Lower School Art Facility. The Arts are one of the three pillars of the school’s mission. A new Arts Building is a key piece of the Campus Master Plan and will include:

1. Lower & Middle School Art;
2. Lower School Music;
3. A community gathering space/gallery.

This 3300 sq. ft. facility will be built in the vicinity of the current LS Art Facility. Building is forecasted to start this spring with completion by the end of 2019. We do not have renderings of the new facility at this time, but we will have them in time for the Spring Gala in May. Proceeds from the Spring Gala also will go towards supporting this building project. Look for more information about this new facility as we get closer to construction.

– Jamie Tender, Head of School

## Art Building History

The current Lower School Art building was moved onto campus in the first month of my headship at SGS in 1985. We purchased the “portable” building from the Valley ESD for \$2,000 and my first “crisis” as school head was how to pay for the building and then how to pay to have it moved and set up. We desperately needed classroom space since the “Learning House” (then grades K-3) was spread out in the old Learning House Buildings (formerly the Davenport House garage and cottage) and 2nd and 3rd grades were being taught in the sun rooms of Davenport House where the heat in the winter was “iffy.”

During that period the school was in deep financial difficulty and paying \$2,000 for a then 20 year old building seemed like a reasonable investment for an inexperienced head, not knowing that foundation, moving, and utility hookups would be an additional \$8,000. With some sleepless nights and innovative re-budgeting we found the money, got the portable moved, and then a platoon of parents descended to repaint, clean, and repair the portable. We got it opened a few weeks after school started. We were so proud of that building because it was the first “new” structure on campus in almost 15 years and symbolized a new period of hope and growth.

– George Edwards, SGS Head of School 1985-90



**Michael Senske**  
President,  
SGS Board of  
Trustees

## SGS Board Report: The Highest Quality Teachers

Happy New Year! I hope that this magazine finds you and your families enjoying a wonderful start to the New Year.

There are many factors that contribute to the quality of a Saint George’s education. These include our students, parents, facilities, staff, curriculum, and most notably the quality and dedication of our teachers. As President of the Saint George’s School Board of Trustees, I want to share a significant item we are working on at the mid-point of the 2018-19 academic year.

The SGS Administration and Board of Trustees anticipated higher teacher salaries in the wake of the McCleary decision and took a proactive approach to the retention and recruitment of our teachers by increasing salaries ahead of the 2017-2018 school year. That being said, the percentage increase that we saw in the local public schools systems exceeded our expectations. As many of you know, Spokane

Public Schools and the Spokane Education Association reached agreement on a contract in the fall of last year that raised teacher’s salaries by an average of 13.3%.

This issue isn’t unique to SGS, as all independent schools in the State of Washington are grappling with the same challenge. Please know that through our short term (annual) and long term budgeting processes, we are working diligently to address this matter. Our goal is to ensure our ability to recruit and retain the highest quality teachers who deliver the high quality education that our families have come to expect from Saint George’s School.

I am absolutely confident that these efforts, combined with our commitment to maintaining a positive and rewarding working environment for our teachers, will allow us to continue delivering an education that is second to none in the greater Spokane area.

– Michael Senske, President, SGS Board of Trustees