

Upon reflecting three years after my graduation, it is striking to me how overwhelmingly and diversely talented the student body of S-SM is. Over the decade since I first entered the school as a sixth grader, the administration has made moves that show enormous commitment to the continued flourishing and growth of the numerous talents on display. Improvements to the many athletic facilities, the construction of Fayfield Hall, and the development of Blended Learning and Scholar*Shift* programs are among a few of the many examples of a deepening investment in the academic and athletic talents of S-SM students.

That said, talents come in many forms, and the current administration appears to recognize this. The proposed construction of a new center for the arts, including a performance hall and brand new arts classrooms, shows that the school not only places immense value in the talents that lead to athletic excellence and academic achievement, but also those talents of artistic expression. During my time at S-SM, the arts were the center of my experience. As a student attending primarily for academic reasons rather than athletic, the school's arts programming provided me with an extracurricular outlet in which to grow as a student, as a person, and as an active member of the S-SM community.

A new arts center would not simply benefit those students involved in the Vocal Performance, Pre-Conservatory, dance, theater, and visual arts programs, but the entire community as a whole. In my experience at S-SM, the arts have served as a common ground for the free expression of the many hidden talents of all students. I co-starred with hockey and soccer players in theater productions; I watched athletes transform into dynamic musicians and imaginative visual artists; I witnessed international students overcoming the obstacles to master comedic performance in a foreign language. Providing platforms for these hidden talents to shine is an essential part of community building, and creates a stronger and more united S-SM student body. To this end, commitment to a cutting edge new arts facility demonstrates that the school values the role of free artistic expression in the development of the human spirit and as a complement to this community's academic achievements and athletic excellence.

Jack Dudley '13
Member, Alumni Association Board