



PDS  
**Spirit**  
The Magazine of Presbyterian Day School

**Write On!**

Teaching the writing process through the Workshop Method

FALL 2019

**Integrating  
Technology**







# **PDS** Spirit FALL 2019

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## A Letter from the Headmaster



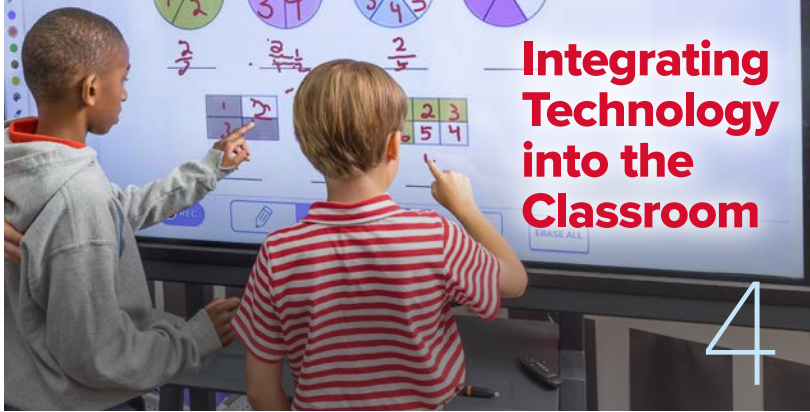
Presbyterian Day School is proud to be celebrating 70 years of dedication to the education of boys in Memphis and beyond. During those seven decades, our mission has never wavered. We always seek to glorify God by developing boys in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. Our approach to the spiritual development of boys was highlighted in our last edition of the *Spirit Magazine*. The issue before you highlights some of the incredible academic programs at PDS.

We are constantly looking for ways to improve both our curriculum and methodologies. Our commitment to the teaching of reading and writing has never been stronger. From the formation of letters and sounds in early childhood classrooms to research papers and speeches in the upper grades, our boys shine when they write. On page 10, you can learn about how we teach the writing process and the goals we have for all of our boys.

As we look forward to our next 70 years, we know our commitment to teaching young boys will never change. Our boys are thinkers, explorers, mathematicians, writers, athletes, musicians, and dreamers. We will continue to provide a strong foundation of both faith and academics to help them thrive for decades to come.

Sincerely,

Steve Hancock  
Headmaster



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# How PDS Integrates Technology into the Classroom

**Create a Drawing**

Write the Fraction  
View Instructions

▶ Play Instructions (00:19)

Write the fractions below each picture.  
Then, record yourself reading each fraction correctly.

The screen displays four circles and two grids. The first circle is divided into 3 equal parts, with 2 parts shaded green and 1 part shaded yellow. The second circle is divided into 4 equal parts, with 1 part shaded purple. The third circle is divided into 5 equal parts, with 1 part shaded blue and 2 parts shaded red. The fourth circle is divided into 6 equal parts, with 3 parts shaded purple. Below the circles are two grids: a 2x2 grid and a 2x3 grid.

ERASE ALL

**The primary purpose of elementary education is to lay the foundational skills needed for all students to excel in life. These foundational skills include not only the academic skills but also the 21st Century skills which technology is integral in developing.**

PDS has always been a pioneer in technology integration. Having a strong technology integration team of highly trained classroom teachers, our primary focus is to assist teachers and students on utilizing best practices for its application in the different learning environments. Our teachers are empowered to design each boy's learning environment to meet his needs and assist his growth by cultivating the best parts of different curricula creating a unique, customized curriculum. Technology is simply one of the tools utilized to achieve this level of academic excellence.

One of the simplest applications of technology in education is its ability to provide immediate feedback on rote learning and the early stages of the writing process. This, in turn, dramatically affects each boy's time spent either one on one or in small groups with his teacher. For example, technology can help a student practice basic computational skills giving instant feedback and retain a student's focus by turning the activity into a fun, game-like scenario that also adapts to his understanding and application of the skill. Quick assessments through the use of an online quiz or a fast-paced Kahoot game allow for teachers to identify how the learning journey is evolving within their classrooms, giving them feedback on what they need to do to help each boy. Even the writing process has changed with the improvement of peer editing and teacher feedback through the use of Google Docs. Starting in 4th grade, the site WPPOnline also assesses students' writing instantly, giving immediate feedback on spelling and grammar errors, as well as giving the students tailored lessons to work through to improve their writing.

### E-Portfolios

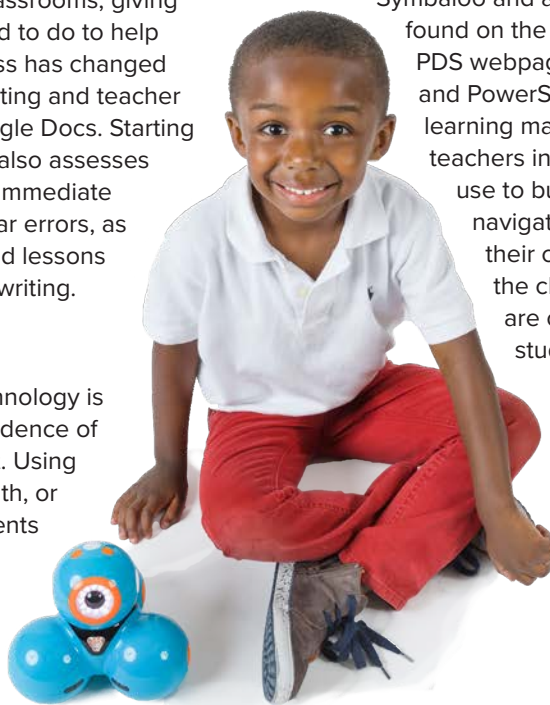
Another valuable way that technology is utilized at PDS is by capturing evidence of student growth and development. Using apps such as SeeSaw, Photo Booth, or FlipGrid, even the youngest students

are able to communicate and record their thinking as they tackle new understandings. Teachers across all grade levels are able to use these captured recordings to identify areas of student growth or misconceptions. These recordings are also shared with the boys' families, communicating to parents what or how their sons are doing at school. This type of e-portfolio (electronic portfolio) is a wonderful tool to celebrate how far each child has developed through the school year.

Acquiring information from the internet is only one part of the skill set needed for children today. It is also essential for our students to understand how to write, collaborate, and publish online content. PDS allows students to develop these skills through the use of SeeSaw, BrainPop, and apps found within Google for Education. Our boys are acquiring digital citizenship skills while learning how to work, comment, and interact online with others. PDS teachers give students safe and meaningful experiences tied to their classroom instruction to develop these skills.

### Customizable Curriculum

Because a state or federally mandated educational program does not bind PDS teachers, they create their curriculum, allowing them to stay up-to-date with the current trends in education and customize the learning experience for each boy based on his needs. Through the use of technology, they can cultivate the best resources and deliver them to the students, as well as share them with the parents. Educational sites are organized through Symbaloo and are an excellent resource found on the different grade levels' PDS webpages. Google Classroom and PowerSchool Learning are two learning management systems teachers in third through sixth grade use to build online resources, navigating students through their curriculum. SeeSaw and the classroom PDS webpage are other resources for students and parents to gain access to the curriculum, as well as an excellent place for parents to use for increasing communication with what is going on in





## 21st Century Skills



each boy's learning journey. As our boys become older, they will be required to have the skill set to learn and grow online, and therefore, our teachers purposefully build the foundation for this type of education.

### 21st Century Skills

Significant components of the 21st Century skills are creativity, imagination, teamwork, and collaboration. Throughout all the grades, students are given opportunities to imagine and create, whether working together or independently, to demonstrate and apply their understanding of skills taught. Each year the skills acquired are built upon so that by their sixth grade, their digital creations are collaborative mashups of many different technological skills. In the early grades, the boys learn many different skills such as how to draw digitally, take photographs with mobile devices, upload and publish content online, add voice-over recordings, and much more. With teacher direction, boys later begin tackling more difficult creations such as making movies and slideshow presentations. By the end of their PDS career, the creative and computer science skills gained allow the older boys to create culminating student choice projects. Retelling stories through elaborate iMovies, building interactive mazes that share what they are learning in class through Scratch (a computer programming site), designing DNA models in Minecraft, and writing and recording songs in GarageBand are just a few examples of what the boys construct. Inherently, boys utilize technology to create, even when it is not a class assignment. Boys have collaboratively written and published newspapers, built websites, games, and flashcards for study guides, and created digital art and music; most importantly, the boys share their works, all designed on their own, with one another. PDS has laid the foundation for the boys and given them the tools to foster digital creations that serve a purpose.

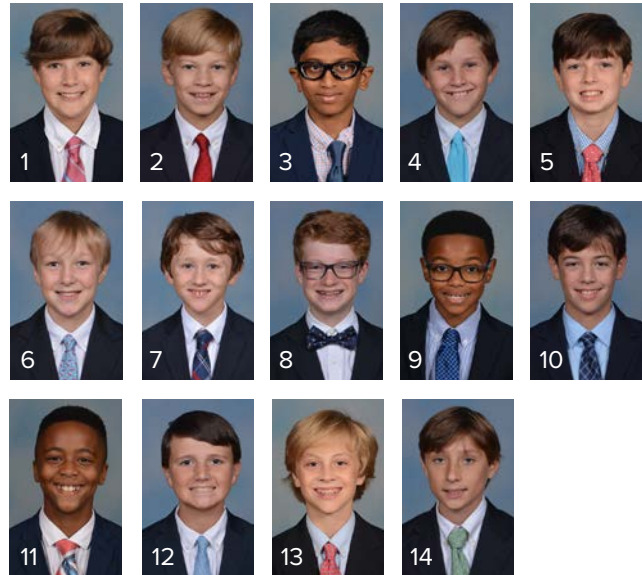
Each year the teachers, the Technology Department, and the administration evaluate and assess how technology is utilized. We make sure that we are laying the foundations needed to work and grow in the 21st century, as well as deliver academic excellence. As technology develops and changes, how we implement it evolves.

If you want to learn more about how each grade level utilizes technology or how PDS strives to make sure each boy is safe and has a balanced technology experience while at school, please feel free to contact Melissa Smith at [msmith@pdsmemphis.org](mailto:msmith@pdsmemphis.org). ●

# Recognition for the Class of 2019

Congratulations to the following sixth-graders from the Class of 2019 who received awards in recognition of their outstanding achievements during their PDS careers.

1. The Vicky C. Spicer Trophy  
Wills Frazer
2. The Minna Thompson Bible Scholarship  
Bennett Frazer
3. The Jane East Award  
Kushal Patel
4. The Motsey Hudson Speech Award  
Wils Moore
5. The Henry Edward Russell Scholarship  
Colt Childress
6. The Elisabeth Horton Laios Trophy  
for General Excellence  
Davis Rudd
7. The Mary Hearn Coleman Award  
Samuel Winstead
8. The Wetter–Boyle Memorial Award  
Stephen Nash
9. The Robert E. Gentry Creative Writing Award  
Chrishton King
10. The Wendy Edwards Award  
Coleman Kimmel
3. The Robert J. Hussey Scholarship  
Kushal Patel
11. The A. W. Dick Trophy  
Mikey Arnold
12. The Charlotte Neal Spirit Award  
Louis Brundick
13. The Headmaster's Trophy  
Owen Gooch
14. MUS Book Award  
Whitt Stockburger





# UNMATCHED **SECURITY** AT PDS





Keeping the boys of PDS safe and secure is of paramount importance. As we seek to know, nurture and love each and every boy on our campus, we must provide a safe place for them to explore. At PDS our security team is always ready to keep our boys out of harm's way.

Our four, dedicated security officers are full-time employees of PDS. The officers are invested in our boys and faculty and bring a professionalism that is unmatched. Constantly rotating throughout the campus, our officers are continually assessing our 29 acre campus.

We invest heavily in the continuing professional development of our officers. When the boys and faculty are away from campus, our guards receive customized training. Multi-day training operations take place in the hallways of our school. Under the supervision of local law enforcement, our security professionals encounter many different scenarios all designed to keep our PDS family safe. We review the feedback from the Memphis SWAT team and change policies to reflect current best practices. Our partnership with the local police departments is unmatched and our officers routinely receive praise for their professionalism and commitment to always being ready.

Keeping our students safe and secure extends beyond the efforts of our highly trained officers. Every adult at PDS is well-versed in the execution of our award-winning Crisis Procedures and Planning Manual. This document is found in every classroom and contains detailed procedures and protocols for a number of potential threats to our school. The document details everything from fire drills to bomb threats. As a faculty and staff, we train for these unthinkable events. Our routine drills are opportunities for us to see these procedures in action and give us crucial information we need to constantly update the manual. The ability to communicate with families during a crisis is also enacted during our intruder drills. We want to give parents the opportunity to understand when we are implementing these important drills at school. Additionally, every teacher at PDS has a backpack filled with emergency equipment and first-aid items.

We live in a time when security is very important. Our officers are constantly surveying our campus to make certain their PDS family is safe and secure. ●

### **Interview with Vonzell Cribbs, Head of Security:**

#### **Q: How long have you served PDS?**

A: I have been an officer at PDS since 2008 and became Head of Security in 2012

#### **Q: What do you enjoy about your position?**

A: I love being with the boys, faculty and staff of PDS. However, most importantly, I love the satisfaction of keeping everyone safe.

#### **Q: What did you do prior to PDS?**

A: Prior to my time at PDS I was an officer with Imperial Security. My first job was working in the family business as a brick layer.

#### **Q: How do you help ensure PDS is safe?**

A: As a team, we are always discussing strategies to keep the campus safe. I am never more than two minutes away from any place on campus. As the Head of Security, I am constantly on call for PDS, and I believe we are one of the safest schools in Memphis. We are always working on getting better through training.

#### **Q: How do you interact with the boys?**

A: I love talking with the boys about sports. On occasion, I have stopped a boy from running into traffic. These experiences give me the opportunity to speak with the boys about always being safe.

#### **Q: Tell us a bit about the other officers.**

A: The officers at PDS are very qualified professionals. They have been well-trained in all aspects of safety and security from active shooters to earthquakes. We work well as a team and are unified in purpose to keep PDS safe.

# Write On!

How the Workshop Method Takes Away the Fright of Writing





The relationship between reading and writing is much like the chicken and the egg. You can't have one without the other. But, without dispute, we do know which one came first — writing!

In the beginning stages of language development, children will make marks, draw pictures, scribble, or invent spellings to infer meaning. As they learn how to decipher the phonetic code, a child's reading and writing skills begin to develop reciprocally. Reading stories inspires children to tell their own stories, and research tells us that children who read extensively become better writers. Although we certainly want our children to take in as much literature as possible, it is easy to fall into a trap of consuming more content than we create. Creating content takes focused work, and explicit writing instruction is critical to producing confident communicators and storytellers.

Another indisputable fact about literacy achievement, particularly in writing, is that a gender gap certainly exists. The generalized perception among educators is that boys do not embrace writing. Maybe it's the passive style of some literature classrooms or the lack of high-interest writing topics; whatever the cause, most state assessments nationwide sadly report the under-achievement of boys. But PDS boys and teachers are fighting against those stereotypes, and our consistently strong WrAP scores (PDS' standardized writing assessment) are evidence of a successful, boy-friendly writing program. Developed at the Teachers College at Columbia University, *Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing* serves as the backbone of our curriculum in first through sixth grade. Taught in a workshop format, this curriculum provides PDS the flexibility to customize writing lessons to meet the distinctive needs of our student body.

Ralph Fletcher, author of *Boy Writers: Reclaiming Their Voices*, stresses the importance of teaching writing in a playful way. Boys love to play, so writing should be taught in a way that promotes creativity and enjoyment. This is another reason PDS approaches writing instruction within a workshop format. Rather than a traditional teaching method of all students writing about the same topic, writer's workshop places high value on student voice and choice. When first graders were learning how to write persuasive essays during the spring semester, one student was quick to express his love of the city of Memphis by trying to convince the reader to visit the FedEx Forum — after all, this is the home of not only the Grizzlies or Memphis Tigers, but Monster Jam! In the few sentences, readers picked up on his passion for loud trucks and wild destruction.

Allowing students the flexibility to choose topics also gives great insight into their developing emotional intelligence. When





Because boys are relational learners, they thrive in a workshop setting with one-on-one teacher conferencing at the center.



fifth graders were writing narratives last fall, one student brought his teacher to tears writing about how he overcame the challenge of rock climbing. Another boy revealed a fear he faced when standing up to an older peer. Without a doubt, our boys have a lot to say when given time to write about topics they value.

Writer's workshop is built upon the premise of learning from and with others. An essential element of writing instruction is studying the work of other authors and using their texts as models. Mentor texts can often inspire new ideas or spur young writers to take risks. To teach our boys to write well, we must show them how, not simply tell them how. This is the very reason that each writing workshop starts with a mini-lesson emphasizing a writing strategy worth emulating. PDS teachers deconstruct mentor texts to showcase the habits of strong writers. Anchor charts, visual representations of good writing habits and strategies, are placed around the room and serve as resources for student writers.

When PDS third graders begin writing and adapting fairy tales, they take time to read various versions of the same fairy tale to become familiar with different interpretations. One version may feature the use of figurative language while another version might showcase characters engaged in dialogue. With strong mentor texts, focused mini-lessons, and an active imagination, students then take time to practice writing on their own. If you open a student's journal, you might find the classic tale *Three Billy Goats Gruff* adapted to *Three Hangry Crusaders*. After all, writing instruction in third grade occurs right before lunch!

Because boys are relational learners, they thrive in a workshop setting with one-on-one teacher conferencing at the center. After mini-lessons are taught and while boys are practicing their craft, the teacher nestles in the corner of the room to confer with individual students. These five-minute, one-on-one conferences can reveal a wealth of insight. Is the student able to apply the teaching point to his

own writing, or does he need targeted help? Is the student able to reflect and communicate his own understanding? What writing strategy should the student focus on before the next conference? The beauty of writer's workshop is that each student writes and receives feedback at a level that pushes him to maximize his abilities. Halfway through the workshop, a teacher might observe a group of students struggling to apply similar writing strategies. In those moments, the teacher often brings those boys together for a focused strategy lesson. Giving effective feedback, customizing instruction, and setting goals together is vital to fostering growth in student writing.

While giving and receiving feedback is an important exchange during the writing conference, teachers and students find that something even more valuable often develops during that time. Relationships grow. Teachers and students get to know one another on a deeper level, and trust builds as a result. Writing requires vulnerability (sharing one's heart and mind with others), and PDS teachers take time to celebrate mistakes and acknowledge effort that leads to learning. That infamous red pen is suddenly not as scary when a student trusts that his teacher knows and cares about him and wants to bring out the best in his writing. At the same time, feedback does not only come from teachers. Purposeful, organized conversation between peers is quite powerful too. Students can learn so much from one another. In fact, many students report that they learn as much, if not more, when giving feedback on a peer's assignment as they do receiving feedback on their own work. We often see boys collaborating together on an assignment and pushing each other to dig deeper and think more critically.

Quite frequently, when boys enter the elementary division, a common phrase is heard throughout the classrooms during the initial writing workshops. "I'm done," says a first grader after he has written what he deems an acceptable few sentences. This two-word phrase indicates that writing is often viewed as a task



to be checked off the to-do list. His teacher responds with a phrase that will become a writer's workshop mantra:

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“When you’re done,  
you’ve just begun!”

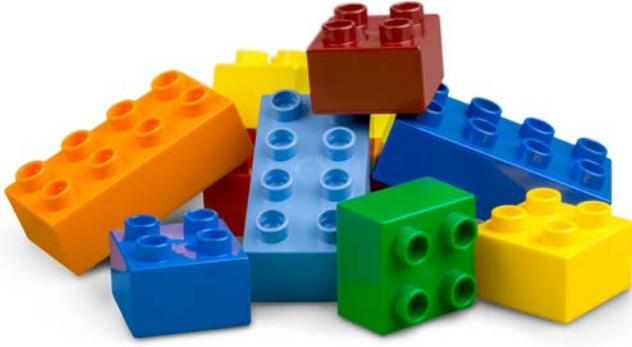
What the young first graders have yet to realize is that writing is a process that includes rehearsing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. A common woe, “I can’t think of anything to write,” is met with brainstorming conferences and flash draft writing. (Flash drafts are quick writing assignments completed without stopping in a single grade-appropriate time period.) Writing is certainly a workout for the brain. Not only do students have to generate ideas rapidly, but the brain also has to process multiple skills and knowledge at once — reading, spelling, fine motor, logic, and emotional regulation.

After all, to write is to take risks, and it’s normal for writers to encounter moments of frustration. Students are often resistant to the revising and editing stages, and it’s helpful to share stories of authors who have experienced much rejection before reaching the publishing stage. The goal is for PDS boys to become resilient writers, displaying flexibility and never losing sight of their goal to be effective communicators. As the boys mature and develop, the writing process becomes second nature. By sixth grade, they have increased their writing stamina and are comfortable working on writing projects for weeks at the time.

Without a doubt, PDS boys love to entertain and be entertained. For this reason, they need to write with a particular audience in mind. When student writers identify their audience, they understand that their writing has purpose. Our second graders have a blast celebrating the publishing stage of their poetry unit by performing a poetry slam, a time to share their writing with classmates and students in other grade levels. All sixth graders spend time composing a speech that is later given orally in front of their classmates. Last year, third-grade boys wrote persuasive essays relating to their hopes and dreams for PDS and presented them to administrators. Fourth-grade students proved that writing involves more than just essays; instead, they created informational posters about the nonprofit Heifer International. These posters, plus a successful Chick-fil-A breakfast, helped raise \$1,375 for the organization.

PDS boys are learning to live each day as readers and writers. Writing isn’t just contained during writing class. It happens all day, every day throughout all PDS classrooms. From lab reports to history essays to writing code, PDS boys are writing across the curriculum, taking feedback, and applying it. At first, the process may seem daunting, but students soon realize that the path helps them share their voices more clearly. PDS boys aren’t scared of a red pen; they love to show off their hard work! 🟢





# Build Well, Play Well, *Live Well*

by Wills Frazer '19

Those who visit my house often wonder why my bedroom is locked down like Fort Knox. I use bungee cords, padlocks, and digital retina scanners to make sure no one enters. Why, you may ask? Am I building a nuclear reactor? No, but I am protecting my prized collection of LEGOs from my little sister, my grimy toddler cousins, and the vacuum cleaner.

One of my earliest memories of playing 2PC soccer and being the goalie is my dad saying, “Protect the goal like you are protecting your LEGOs” and that’s just what I’ve done. Well, I don’t know about the soccer part, but my LEGO world is perfectly safe.

I have loved LEGOs since I was four years old. Over the course of my esteemed career I have built rocket ships, castles, sports cars, and everything in between. As a result, what used to be my room is now a world of colored bricks governed by a vast population of LEGO minifigures. Today I will be sharing with you three of the reasons why I love LEGOs: the possibilities of what you can design

and build are endless, they connect me to a larger community, and I can use them to create my own worlds.

First, I love LEGOs because the possibilities are endless. According to Danish mathematician Soren Eilers, you can assemble 915,103,765 different combinations using only six basic two by four bricks. Couple 915 million with 52 colors and over 2 thousand pieces, and that makes for a pretty large variety of things you can build. You can use all those pieces to build things the average person would never get to experience. Hey, I don’t think I’ll ever own an Aston Martin, but I have already spent many hours ejecting minifigures from the passenger seat of Agent 007’s sweet ride, set number 10262. And I probably will never visit France, but I have already witnessed many al fresco meals at the Parisian Restaurant, set number 10243. Finally, LEGO sets are easy to repurpose because all you have to do is reassemble the pieces in a different manner. One of the most memorable LEGO moments for me was when I received my first set, the City Fire Station, set number 7208. I spent hours putting together those six hundred pieces with my Dad, and as I “clicked” the last piece into place, you could almost hear the Hallelujah Chorus ringing through my ears. The clouds parted and in through the window the light shown upon the set, and ever since that moment I’ve been hooked. That exact same set has been reused many times into an ATM Machine, Santa’s sleigh, and a Redbox Movie Rental. The fact that there are so many things you can do with LEGOs that spark your imagination and let you accomplish things that may otherwise prove impossible is one of the things I love most about them. Another is that they connect me to a larger community.

I’ve got a really big number to share with you. For every one human on the planet there are eighty LEGO bricks. That means there are roughly 600 Billion LEGO bricks in the universe, so I think it’s safe to say I’m not the only one who likes them. I love being a part of the extended LEGO community. Did you know that LEGO.com translates into over forty-eight languages, including Korean, Dutch, Čeština (Sestina) and Lietuviskai (Liet-a-visk-eye). Yeah I’ve never heard of those last two either, but my point is that there are LEGO fans all around the globe. Similar to mathematics, LEGO is a universal language. No matter if you are building with someone who speaks Japanese or Swahili, you



can find a way to communicate with anyone about “this 1x4 technique elbow” or “that 4x6 door frame.” Another way LEGOs have become a community is they are multigenerational. LEGOs have been around for almost ninety years and they have begun to be passed down. My Dad and I rebuilt his old sets, I have some of my uncle’s pieces, and I’m even teaching my five year old cousin to like them. Finally, you better watch out for the LEGO minifigure apocalypse, because at a staggering four billion, minifigures would be the most populous ethnic group on the planet. The fact that LEGOs generate such a diverse community is one really fun reason that I love them, but I saved my favorite for last. With LEGOs, I can create my own worlds and change them at will.

For most of my time at PDS, I have been considered one of the tall kids in my class. So it may surprise you to learn that my ideal height is actually only 38.4 millimeters tall, the exact height of a LEGO minifigure. If I could shrink down to that size, I could explore the world that I have built. In the center of my room is a 5 foot by 5 foot table that serves as the hub of my LEGO world. My minifigures can stroll through town square, eat at the 50s style diner, catch Endgame at the theater, or shoot some pool at the saloon. My LEGOs are not contained to the table though; they cascade onto the floor and cover every horizontal surface. One of the things I like most about my LEGO world is its flexibility. If I dislike the width of the sidewalks, I can widen them. If the roof on city hall is too angular, I’ll lessen the pitch. Everything in LEGO world is lighthearted and transient, and that’s what makes it so much fun. If you look carefully, you

might see Ursula the octopus waiting tables at the sushi bar or banana man minifigure cleaning windows at City Hall. I love the simplicity of life in LEGO world; everything is as it seems on the surface. And if something doesn’t work or the minifigures need a change of scenery, I just move them. I’m hoping my experience designing and building Lego sets will get me a scholarship to college, but if not, my parents threaten they will just have to sell them all to pay for it.



Even if you aren’t a die hard LEGO fan like me, you must admit they are ubiquitous. You may be thinking, “LEGOs, ughhh,” but I’ll bet that you have some in your house. This relatability of LEGOs truly transcends all age groups, because let’s face it, everyone likes to play. LEGO founder Ole Kirk Christiansen worked this truth into his company name. The word (Lai gut) leg godt in Danish means, “play well” and in Latin, “I put together.” I think LEGOs have taught me not just to “play well” but also to live well. My love of LEGOs has helped me understand that the possibilities in life are infinite, the way to succeed is to connect with other people, and if you make a mistake, just start over. ♥



# True Grit:

## Giving Your Child Tools to Bounce Back from Life's Challenges



### Failure IS an option—and it's a good one.

Fostering resilience and grit in our children can seem like an elusive task and one that requires those very traits from parents. But like anything of value, the task is not one-and-done. There is no magic solution to raising self-reliant, determined children, but the good news is that making simple, day-to-day changes can produce lasting benefits.

So what do we mean by the terms resilience and grit? We like psychologist Angela Duckworth's definitions: "Resilience is to bounce back. Grit is to persevere." At PDS, we believe in partnering with parents to cultivate these values in everyday situations. The point is not to dwell on our missteps but rather to readjust and build in time for our children to experience true learning, which often comes from flat-out failure.

**Fail forward.** Entitlement culture and unrealistic standards have set our kids up for a world of hurt, and many children resort to giving up when something doesn't come easy. Even worse, some don't even attempt a goal they aren't certain to achieve. So how do we build them up and encourage them to take risks? Simply saying "Good job!" isn't the trick; we must let them experience hard work and failure for themselves.

"To take charge of their learning, the students have to allow themselves thinking time and not expect immediate gratification of an answer or understanding of a skill or concept," says fifth-grade teacher Kim Pruitt. "They have to search for ways to problem-solve when something doesn't go as planned."

PDS boys go through the process of trial and error regularly in the EDGE studio, where they employ design-thinking skills to solve human-centered problems. The students identify solvable issues, create proposed solutions, and test prototypes. Unless they're lucky, the boys usually have to rework their prototypes several times. This type of problem-solving teaches them that failure is a necessary step on the path to success.

Our curriculum is designed to help build resilience and grit. One area where our boys make great strides is through our writing workshop. "Boys in particular, when they sit down to write, don't want to rework an assignment multiple times," says Laura Glenn, Head



of Elementary. “So this idea of having to go back and edit, conference with your teacher, and peer-edit is not particularly enjoyable for them. It requires them to dig deeper, to take the next step, and to push themselves a little bit more.” After forging through the editing process, the students gain confidence that they could only have achieved by themselves.

**Land the helicopter.** We love our children and want the best for them, but sometimes love clouds our vision. Mark Fruitt, Principal of Elementary, says it well: “It’s in our nature as parents to try and prepare the path for our children instead of preparing our children for the path.” When we bail our kids out of everyday situations, we might save time and hassle in the short term, but we rob them of learning time-management and decision-making skills in the long term. You know the scenario: Your child forgets his homework, so you drive back to school to deliver it. That’s when love blinds us and we begin bulldozing the road instead of letting our children experience the bumps. PDS is a safe place for your boys to fail and a great training ground for the uncharted paths ahead. We all have our “off” days, but if a student forgets his homework once a semester, he’ll be OK. Plus, he’ll learn a valuable lesson about being responsible and taking ownership of his schoolwork.

Dr. Bill Stixrud and Ned Johnson, authors of *The Self-Driven Child*, urge parents to stop micromanaging things like their kids’ homework and friends: “Instead of thinking of yourself as your child’s boss or manager, try consultant.” They insist that giving children more of a sense of control over their lives is the key to minimizing their stress and anxiety. No doubt about it; parents still have authority, but children thrive when given some freedom and autonomy. Plus, it ensures they will thrive outside the safety of home and school.

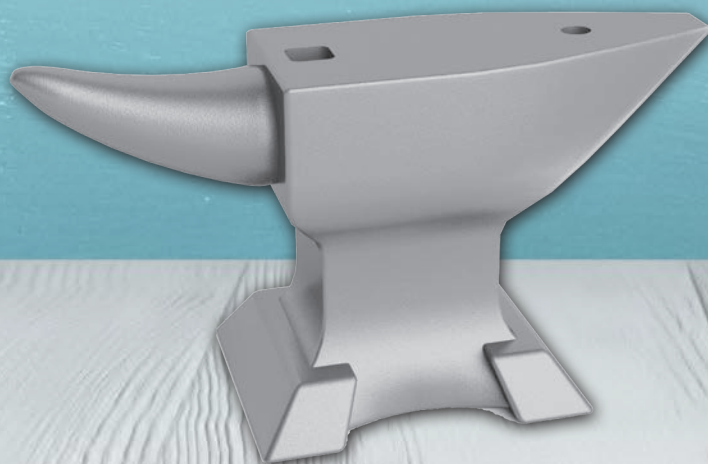
On the flip side, if you feel you’ve caved on an important issue with your child, all is not lost. For instance, at PDS, we recommend waiting until eighth grade before allowing your child to have a smartphone. But if your child gets one earlier than that, you can always walk back their privileges. Try taking certain apps off their phones and setting parental controls. You might not rack up cool points with your child, but you will have regained something that you wouldn’t get back if they continued with unlimited access.

When we bail our kids out of everyday situations, we might save time and hassle in the short term, but we rob them of learning time-management and decision-making skills in the long term.

**Depending on children teaches them dependability.** When you give children daily chores that you expect them to complete, you empower them to become dependable. They also gain confidence knowing that they play a vital role in your household (or in the classroom). What can be challenging is letting kids carry out tasks in their own ways. For instance, if we ask them to make their beds, we can’t go behind them and straighten the pillows. Allowing children to explore their own methods inspires creativity and independence.

If you loosen your kids’ reins in certain areas, you might find that their confidence grows. For instance, it seems reasonable that a sixth grader could run into the grocery store to get you a loaf of bread or that your third-grader could walk to a neighbor’s house to borrow an egg. Children are capable of more than you realize, and the outside world isn’t nearly as dangerous as the news and other sources would have you think. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, the violent crime rate fell 49 percent between 1993 and 2017.

“We have to let our kids fail and feel uncomfortable so they can learn to navigate through different situations,” says Jean Nabors, fifth- and sixth-grade learning coach. “At PDS, I think we do a great job of helping our students develop a tool set that they can draw on when things get tough.”





**Cultivate empathy.** In today’s “selfie” culture, it’s all too easy for young people (and let’s face it, adults) to create goals centered on personal success. That competitive drive isn’t always a bad thing, but at PDS, we try to keep it in perspective. “Resilience is the long-term result of the daily displays of grit,” says Palmer Albertine, physical education teacher. “A boy who is able to look past his momentary struggle and see it as an opportunity to develop determination and integrity is a valuable character trait that will help him succeed in life more than the temporary feeling of success after a win. A coach’s job is to teach this true perspective of sports and avoid basing success on records and stat sheets.”

Focusing on good sportsmanship also helps our boys to develop empathy and understand the importance of bettering the community around them. When your child seems deflated or lacking empathy, try tackling a volunteer project with him or making lists of things you’re both grateful for. Stepping outside ourselves (and stepping outside, literally) does wonders for our well-being and helps us bounce back when things don’t go our way.

**Dig deep to keep from being shallow.**

Build in time for your kids to reflect on their ups and downs. Whether you encourage them to find 10 minutes of quiet after a long day or put away the devices and take a short walk with them, stepping away from the grind allows our minds to reflect and reset. And that’s something we need to help us persevere.

As Jessica Lahey, author of *The Gift of Failure* says: “Today, careless afternoons in the woods seem like a quaint throwback because the pressure to succeed from an early age has ramped up for both parents and kids. It never lets up, and there is no longer room in our children’s schedules for leisure time in the woods, let alone opportunities to problem-solve their way of out of the muck and mire they encounter there.”

If resilience is the ability to bounce back, then we have to create the space to allow that growth. When the grit is wearing thin, take a rest before getting back in the game. And whether it’s basketball, homework, or a daily chore at home, each student (like any good Memphian) is learning what it truly means to “grit and grind.” 🟢

**Recommended Reading for Parents**

- *The Gift of Failure* by Jessica Lahey
- *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* by Angela Duckworth
- *Free Range Kids* by Lenore Skenazy
- *The Self-Driven Child* by William Stixrud, PhD. and Ned Johnson
- *Helping Children Succeed* by Paul Tough
- *UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World* by Michele Borba
- *How to Raise Successful People: Simple Lessons for Radical Results* by Esther Wojcicki





## Teacher Feature: Merideth Arnold

A Memphis native, Merideth Arnold has been with PDS for 25 years, having joined the school in 1994. Over the years Mrs. Arnold taught third grade and fourth grade before helping us launch our PK program. An alumna of Hutchison School, Mrs. Arnold received a degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Memphis.

### How did you get interested in teaching?

Looking back on my childhood, “playing school” was something I did often. I had a flannel board and remember being the teacher with my dolls and friends. I was fortunate to have encouraging professors in college and to have a very satisfying student teaching experience.

### Why do you teach?

I love being with children and watching them learn. I find learning to be a continual and exciting process

and I love it for myself as well as for my boys. Helping parents navigate the earliest years of their child’s educational experience brings fulfillment and joy to me.

### Why Teach at PDS?

I love being with little boys. Boys are curious, have boundless energy, and lots of love for their teachers. PDS remains unique in that it continues to provide not only a loving, Christ-centered education, but also an education that is academically superior. The school is intentional in every aspect of serving the boys’ physical, emotional, spiritual, and academic needs. In addition, PDS strongly supports those same needs for its parents, faculty, and staff. Working together, we seek to uphold our mission of “developing boys in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.” I find myself energized and challenged to be a part of this incredible community and to witness first hand the excellent education my son and grandson have received.

### What do you enjoy when not at PDS?

I enjoy being with my family and friends and spending time with my five grandchildren. I like to walk, ride my bike, play mahjong, and read.

### What is the most important life lesson you want your students to learn?

“Good morning God,  
This is your day,  
I am your child,  
Show me your way.” ●





# We know boys.

In Ken Robinson's recent book *You, Your Child, and Your School* he makes many claims about education. "One of the reasons you have to think differently about education these days is that the world your children are living in is so different from the one that you and your parents grew up in." Families, children, and work are all changing rapidly. Even though our mission remains unchanged, that does not mean our approach to education is not constantly evolving.

Our continued commitment to a customized approach to learning is visible in our desire to see each and every student succeed. We actively teach the boys of PDS to be critical and creative thinkers. We plant the seeds for the development of these skills and watch as our students become leaders in Memphis and beyond. As a faculty, we remain committed to learning how boys learn best. We utilize this research to inform our teaching practices and curriculum. We are proud to be boy experts.

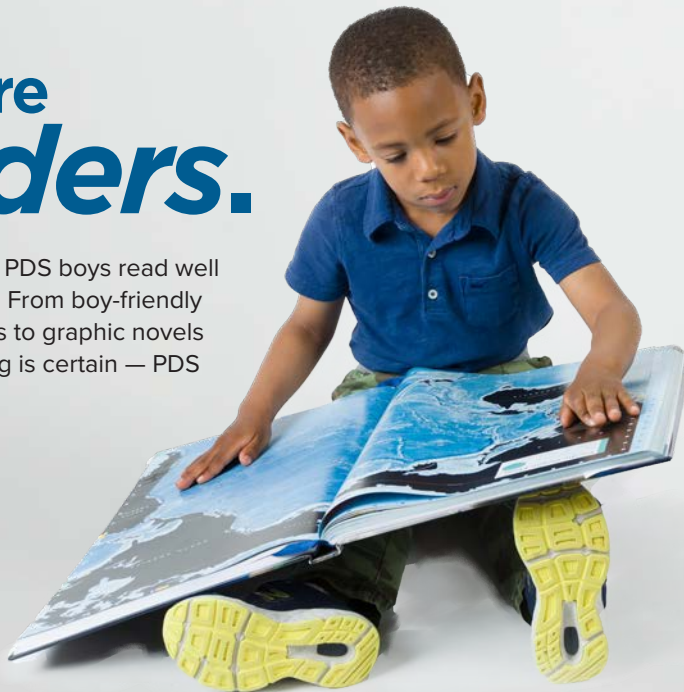


## Boys are *artists.*

A quick peek into the art studio will reveal imaginations running wild. Our visual arts curriculum exposes students to elements of art and principles of design in works of art and the surrounding environment. Art is celebrated every school year at the PDS Art Walk, a colorful event showcasing student talent.

## Boys are *readers.*

In an average year, PDS boys read well over 16,000 books. From boy-friendly informational books to graphic novels to fantasy, one thing is certain — PDS boys love to read!



## Boys are *scientists.*

3-2-1 Blast Off! PDS boys love gathering outside each spring to watch the launching of carefully constructed fifth-grade rockets. Why do they fly so high? How might I reduce the drag coefficients in my design? These questions and other scientific inquiries are investigated every day in our science labs.







## Boys are *athletes.*

It doesn't matter if they are playing four square or football; PDS boys are on the move every day during PE and recess. After-school intramural sports, offered throughout the school year, provide boys with an opportunity to explore a variety of sports and engage in friendly competition.

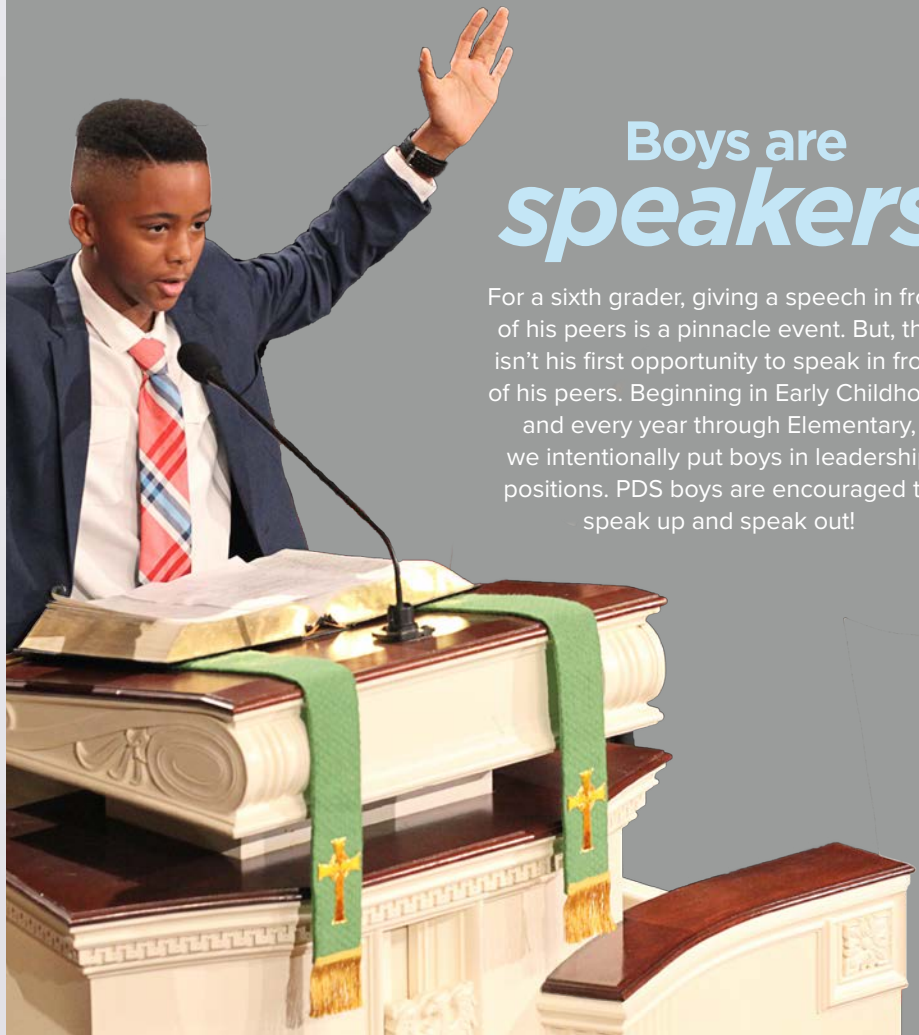
## Boys are *makers.*

Whether through tinkering or deliberate building, our focus on hands-on learning enables the boys to embrace their creative side. At PDS' annual Maker Faire, the boys come together to showcase their unlimited imaginations.



## Boys are *speakers.*

For a sixth grader, giving a speech in front of his peers is a pinnacle event. But, this isn't his first opportunity to speak in front of his peers. Beginning in Early Childhood and every year through Elementary, we intentionally put boys in leadership positions. PDS boys are encouraged to speak up and speak out!





## Boys are *worshippers*.

From the very beginning, PDS boys learn the power of prayer and the importance of worshipping God. Our chapel services are linked with our character education program (we call it *Building Boys, Making Men*) with an ultimate goal of creating godly men who will serve their families and city.



## Boys are *musicians*.

At PDS, we channel a boy's loud energy into joyful noise. With opportunities to participate in both vocal and instrumental music, PDS boys don't miss a beat and quickly develop confidence in their ability to perform in front of large audiences.



## Boys are *writers*.

PDS boys write for purposeful audiences, and writing isn't just contained during writer's workshop. It happens all day, every day throughout all PDS classrooms. From lab reports to history essays to writing code, PDS boys are writing across the curriculum.







# Presbyterian Day School

4025 Poplar Avenue | Memphis, TN 38111

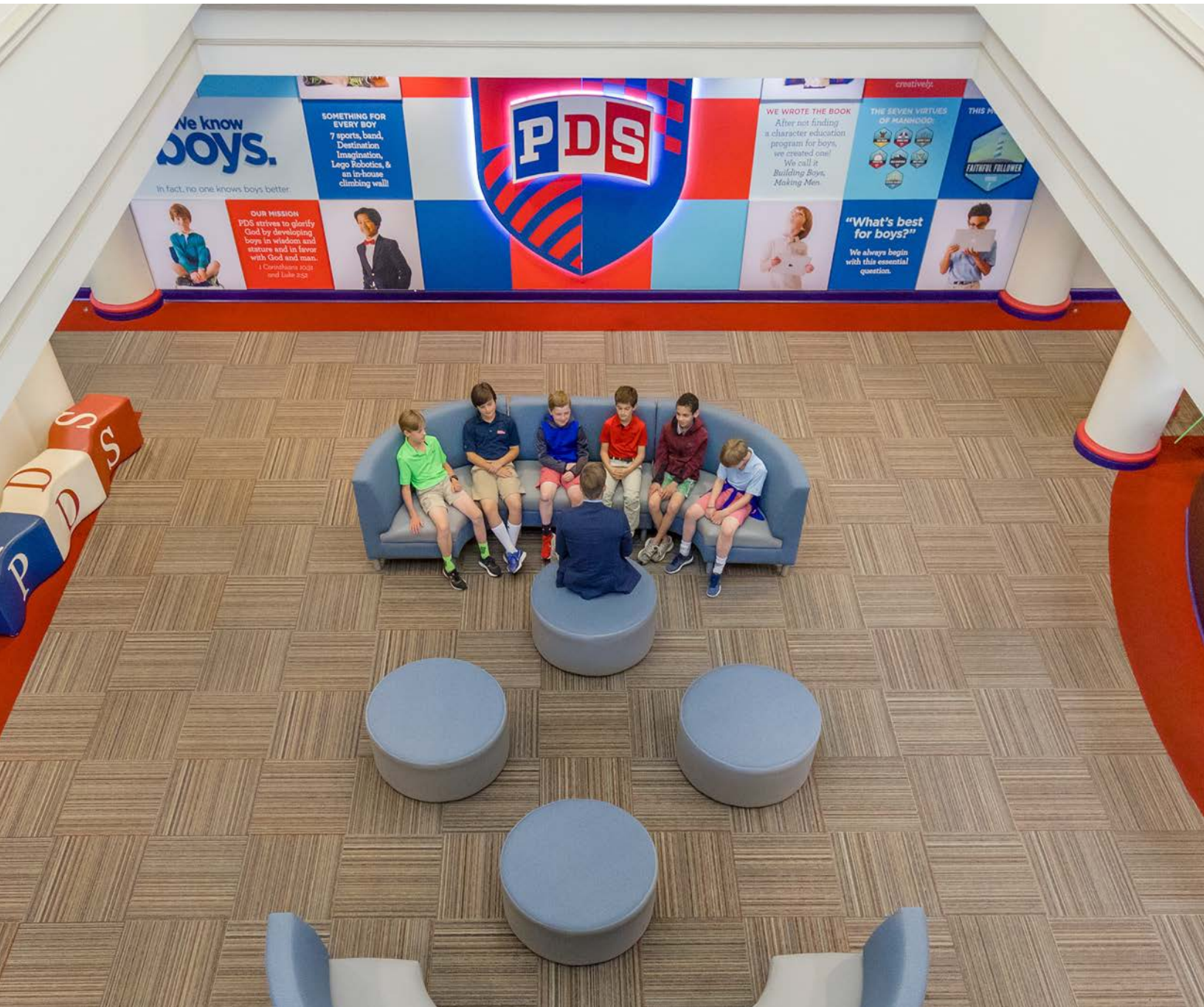
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MEMPHIS, TN  
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We know  
**boys.**

In fact, no one knows boys better.

### SOMETHING FOR EVERY BOY

7 sports, band, Destination Imagination, Lego Robotics, & an in-house climbing wall



### WE WROTE THE BOOK

After not finding a character education program for boys, we created one! We call it *Building Boys, Making Men.*

### THE SEVEN VIRTUES OF MANKIND



### THIS P...



### OUR MISSION

PDS strives to glorify God by developing boys in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. 1 Corinthians 13:11 and Luke 2:52



### "What's best for boys?"

We always begin with this essential question.

