Timeless & timely messaging: how to honor where you’ve been & celebrate where you’re headed

Andy Delinsky, The Peck School
Shelly Peters, CRANE | Atlanta
"The best of schools continue to find ways to honor the past while moving bravely into the future."

Andrew Delinsky
Head of School
The Peck School
“Your brand should be one of your organization’s most powerful and unifying assets. Steward it accordingly.”

Shelly Peters
Principal
CRANE | Atlanta
What we’ll cover
What we’ll cover

• Ritual & tradition
• Exercise part 1
• Change
• Storytelling
• Outcomes
• Exercise part 2
• Lessons learned
How do school leaders honor institutional history while moving the school forward—especially when there’s a need to evolve, alter, or even sunset rituals or traditions?
Ritual & tradition
About The Peck School

• Morristown, NJ
• 30 miles outside NYC
• Competitive market of excellent independent schools
About The Peck School

• Founded 1893
• K-8
• Non-denominational
• Average 335 students each year
About The Peck School

• Founded 1893
• K-8
• Non-denominational
• Average 335 students each year
• And we LOVE traditions!
TRADITIONS

Many of our students’ strongest memories are also the school’s oldest traditions.

Some of our traditions are as many as 150 years old (Declamation Contest); others are decades strong (Battle of the Heads). Some of our traditions are serious and reverent (Vespers); others are nothing more than good old fashioned silliness (screaming your head off during Blair Week pep rally.)

And speaking of silly, just what does "Ala Viva" mean?

WHAT DOES THE ALA VIVA MEAN?

"You can go anywhere around the world to Peddie alumni everywhere in every country, you can say Ala Viva and they’ll know what it means."
LOWER SCHOOL TRADITIONS

The childlike spirit in all of us is perhaps best expressed in the beloved traditions of the Lower School. Beginning with Friday Sharing Assemblies and October's schoolwide Fall Frolics carnival, our students are immersed in rich experiences all year long.

Friday Sharing Assemblies

We invite parents to join us for our weekly Friday Sharing Assemblies, where students come together to sing, practice speaking, showcase their studies, and learn to be an audience. This special time to gather together and celebrate learning and community dates from our founding in 1904.
School Traditions

Standing traditions make going to school at Solebury memorable, distinctive, and fun.

HOUSE COMPETITIONS
Community celebrations and gatherings form a lifetime of memories for BCD students and their families. These traditions honor our past, reinforce our community spirit, and help shape the BCD experience in lasting and meaningful ways for the generation of students to come.

**Grandparents' & Grand Friends' Day:** All grandparents and special friends are invited to attend Grandparents' & Grand Friends' Day—a highlight of the year. The morning is filled with activities planned by the students and teachers, and includes grandparents visiting classes and enjoying lunch together with their student's friends and family members.

**Thanksgiving Soup:** The largest gathering of the year for the school community is Thanksgiving Soup, a meal shared by the entire school. Each class is responsible for contributing an element of the soup, which is prepared and served by parent volunteers. As we come together, we use the opportunity to thank members of our community for their help and support, and reflect on the meaning of Thanksgiving. A high point of the celebration is the welcoming back of BCD alumni/ae.

**Holiday Outreach:** During holiday seasons, BCD students participate in programs that help instill a sense of community involvement and sharing. In December, each division or pairs of divisions adopts a family.
Why traditions & rituals?

• Connect generations
• Honor the past
• Reinforce community
• Show the joy/fun of a school’s experience
• Highlight unique and distinctive school culture
Exercise part 1
Exercise part 1

On your handout, list your school’s rituals and traditions.
Change
Why change a tradition?

• Some can be unintentionally exclusive rather than intentionally inclusive.

• Others have become inconsistent with the current mission and vision of the school.
Facilitating change

Andy’s approach at Peck

• Listen and learn
• Diagnose
• Refine some traditions
• Respect the integrity of key cultural touchstones
Listen & learn

As a new head, I...

• met with every faculty, staff, and board member within my first 3 months to understand Peck’s culture, strengths, and opportunities.

• undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process my first year, including focus groups with various Peck constituents and community surveys.
I learned...

• community members had **very different views** on exactly what constitutes a Peck tradition.

• curricular and programmatic change was not always welcomed—especially where **curriculum was tied directly to tradition**.
I learned...

• generally, traditions are considered a **major strength** of the school.

• some specific traditions held **greater emotional value** than others.

• and a few specific traditions were even seen as **holding the school back**.
Patience is the key which solves all problems.

Sudanese proverb
John Kotter’s
Eight Steps of Change
Refine & respect

Our approach to Peck’s 2015 Strategic Plan is an example of refining our school while respecting our tradition.

Filled with plans for an exciting new future, the plan begins with an important nod to our past.
Building From Strength

Since 1993, The Peck School has stood for excellence in education. With an emphasis on character education and a challenging yet inspirational academic program, Peck has many strengths to celebrate and to carry into the future. While new technology, societal shifts, and dynamic local and global trends demand ongoing attention and require programmatic evolution, we believe that core elements of the Peck experience must remain intact as they tirelessly serve our students and families and represent the heart of who we are and what we do. We commit to ensuring Peck remains true to its history and core beliefs as we continue to prepare students to lead healthy, productive, and principled lives.

WHAT WE PROMISE:

- Remain a mission driven school
- Continue graduating engaged, disciplined, and organized learners, while equipping students with the life skills necessary to succeed and to thrive in a complex, changing world
- Maintain our focus on character education, TriDeCoRe, and Consideration of Others, while always seeking opportunities to build character and make value-based decisions
- Honor our history and remain a school of traditions, one that values a firm handshake, strong eye contact, and the everyday manners that have been a hallmark of a Peck experience for years
- Remain a school that deeply values relationships and connections between students, parents, faculty, and staff, and alumni
- Continue prioritizing the growth and development of our faculty and staff
- Steadfastly search for families who are committed to and embrace the Peck experience
- Enhance our local and national reputation as a K-8 school of choice
Refine & respect

• Consideration of others and character education—including handshakes and eye contact, our school values, and everyday manners

• Family Dining, including a sense of service/table manners, lunchtime blessings, and community conversation
Refine & respect

• Cross-grade and schoolwide community-building events (Reach Across, Buddy programs, All-School Assemblies, Kairos Days)

• Community building through the Welcome Back Dinner, schoolwide concerts, the annual PA Fundraiser, Downy-Redhead Day, and others

• A holistic sports program, highlighted by a 3-season Upper School sports/activities requirement
The Peck School pin was presented to girls who completed “First Year High.”
Strategic Plan 2015
Campus Master Plan 2016
Branding Initiative 2017
Capital Campaign Launch 2018
Construction Conclusion 2019
Storytelling
Reclaiming your story

How do school leaders honor institutional history while moving the school forward—especially when there’s a need to evolve, alter, or even sunset rituals or traditions?
Reclaiming your story

And how can schools communicate the continuing value of yesterday’s traditions to today’s students—especially for outside audiences, with no nostalgic ties to them?
Peck case study

• Peck was well-known as a treasure trove of tradition.
• But Peck was chronically underappreciated as a seat of curricular innovation and academic energy.
• The school needed to explain how its traditions *form a stable culture in which students feel safe to strive harder*, try new things, take risks, and learn more.
Peck case study

Together, CRANE and Peck developed a messaging platform aimed not only at boosting inquiries, applications, and enrollment, but also:

- Capturing and celebrating Peck’s indelible identity
- Capitalizing on pedagogical advancements
- Reintroducing Peck to the Morristown community
Guiding Principles

For storytelling & positioning
All new messaging for The Peck School must...

Convey both the depth and dexterity of a Peck education by showing the dynamic interplay between the school’s timeless cultural traditions and the timely, transformative outcomes that emerge from Peck’s fresh teaching approaches and modern methods.
All new messaging for The Peck School must...

**Promote greater awareness of the innovation, energy, and sheer joy** that fills Peck’s classrooms to counter the school’s outdated reputation for grinding academic intensity.
Guiding Principles / 3

All new messaging for The Peck School must...

**Demonstrate the warm, welcoming nature of Peck's “family school” culture**—and the profound kindness and compassion teachers extend to students, students offer classmates, and Peck families share with one another—to dispel the misconception that the Peck community is exclusive.
All new messaging for The Peck School must...

**Explain the interrelated nature of character education at Peck,** where good manners, handshakes, and respectful behavior progress to meaningful and empathetic relationships between students and educators and among peers—and lead to a lifetime of enriching relationships with people from all walks of life.
Guiding Principles / 5

All new messaging for The Peck School must...

Reframe Peck’s relationship with the local community by introducing the school’s people, programs, and campus more intentionally to the Morristown area, so The Peck School grows into a well-known, friendly, and trusted local learning resource.
Metaconcept

The big idea
YOU WANT A TIMELESS EDUCATION FOR YOUR CHILD, built on enduring values that hold true. And she needs a school that shapes her budding talents into timely, modern capacities.

AT THE PECK SCHOOL, she solidifies her own character with every firm handshake and each kind word, mapping milestones of respectful interaction that lead her toward intentional, inspiring relationships and her own place in a changing global community.

SHE BUILDS ON THE AGELESS KNOWLEDGE of a challenging curriculum even as she develops information-age know-how. As she confidently grapples with the immediacy of problems to solve, her teachers guide each argument she advances and her classmates cheer every solution she engineers.
AND SHE GROWS BOLD in the safety of a childhood defined by customs and celebrations of a gentler age, of field days and school pride, while she also prepares intensively for the years ahead—in secondary school, college, career, and far beyond.

OUR TRADITIONS ARE TRANSFORMING—shaping and reshaping our methods, your expectations, and most importantly, her mind, her perspective, and her future.
Messaging framework
timeless traditions
timeless traditions | timely transformation
inquiry
inquiry | energized
character
character | recast
sportsmanship
sportsmanship | underscored
creativity
creativity | reimagined
values  revitalized
Visual assets

Tweaking the logo
Visual assets

Leveraging fresh color & existing architecture
Messaging vehicles

Admissions brochure
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inquiry

What does your child need from the start?

A curriculum that nourishes essential curiosities. A sound mathematical progression that guides him inevitably from skip counting to algebraic equations. A steady trajectory that leads him from mastering vocabulary words to crafting stories to analyzing poetic form.

At Peck, we start by helping him lay stable scholarly foundations in an academic atmosphere that values focus, self-discipline, commitment, and reflection.
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energized

Peck teachers also infuse your child’s studies with fresh energy, engagement, and excitement.

First, she reads a fairytale about three goats crossing a river—then she uses wood and glue (and basic physics) to build their bridge. Later, she studies Latin by becoming a city planner, recreating an ancient Roman community architecturally, culturally, and economically.

Inspired by active learning and thought-provoking processes, she develops the creativity and optimism to find her place in a changing world.
character

At Peck, we teach composure and conscientiousness—not because polite behavior is an end in itself, but because it is one way we express our deep and genuine regard for others. Day by day, as our students learn to extend and expect care and consideration, they develop trust in our consistently kind community.

Studied by this sense of shared safety, Peck students form intentional, inspiring relationships across the full spectrum of the Peck family.

This warm environment inculcates both a sense of self-confidence and a deeply felt duty to others. Peck students are brave but tactful communicators, bold but supportive collaborators, and engaged local and global citizens.
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recast

We maintain our family-style dining tradition because it gives students of all ages a seat at the table with teachers from all divisions—and makes them feel seen, heard, and loved by the adults who share their lives.

Your child also shares meals with schoolmates from different grades, supplementing friendships formed across grade levels through our Kindergarten Buddy and Reach Across programs. While she explores our shared values, she also learns to celebrate our differences.

Ultimately, our layered, thoughtful approach to character education nurtures a dynamic empathy that stretches well past Peck—and fosters not just good comportment, but great depth of character.
creativity

Your child benefits from the creative empowerment and cultural literacy that accompanies early immersion in a strong, traditional arts program.

He dives deeply into the canon, right from the start—not only studying Van Gogh’s paintings, but also considering his life and times, and applying his style to his own landscapes.

At Peck, he enters into a community of artists, actors, and musicians, where he reaps the innate emotional and intellectual benefits of self-expression.
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Pock teachers also instill a deep appreciation for the wider art of making.

Even as a kindergartner, your child displays problem-solving skills, along with beads and pipe cleaners, to build a cart capable of hauling a small cargo of grapes. Later, she musters sewing and wording to create folk toys as part of a larger study of regional history.

As she works through real-world problems, using both her hands and her head, she crafts concrete solutions and builds tangible answers—bringing facts, theories, and principles to vivid life.
athletics

Our athletic philosophy starts with the personal development of each player—and the positive effect of sports on your child’s intellectual, physical, and emotional growth.

Beginning with structured games in Kindergarten and progressing to organized sports by the third grade, he learns discipline by accepting the covenant of rules.

And through middle school, he develops tenacity by engaging the complexity of technique, even as he builds confidence and courage through interscholastic competition.

And he emerges from each game a stronger and wiser individual.
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And he emerges from each game a stronger and surer individual.

At Pec, we speak sportsmanship as a fundamental respect for others—for every person on the field, on the court, or in the gym.

Here, your child learns both the vital importance of teamwork and the relative insignificance of personal achievement, and how to rigorously but respectfully engage opponents—fighting hard but playing fair, remaining humble in victory and staying gracious in defeat.

In the process, he develops not only as an accomplished player but also as an uncommonly good sport.
The Peck School, defined.

Academics, invigorated.
We offer your child both academic rigor and intellectual wings. Here she builds a foundational repository of time-honored knowledge while also developing forward-looking Dorothy, a problem-solver, design-thinking and collaborator. Along the way, she learns to trust her efforts, take personal responsibility for her academic success, and find an abiding joy in discovery.

Values, revitalized.
We make critical connections between outward actions and deep reflections, teaching your child that the act of shaking his classroom hand or meeting his teacher’s eyes are never simple ends in themselves. Instead, he learns that he establishes real relationships and encourages dynamic empathy across grade levels, with educators, and eventually with the wider world.

Childhood, honored.
Our K-8 model allows your child to grow into her full potential while also ensuring she doesn’t grow up too soon. She progresses seamlessly from a kindergarten unceasingly with her fourth-grade buddy to an eighth-grade leader in her own right. And she grows brave in a supportive, secure community shaped by a respect for an age-appropriate atmosphere and the traditions of a gentler time.

Making, recreated.
Your child learns in a strong traditional arts program at Peck, learning to appreciate great painters and musicians, while also finding a new outlet for self-expression in the generosity of his original art. He also finds a spirit of creativity in our classrooms, maker spaces, and woodshop, where our students create both answers and artful solutions instead of merely memorizing content.

Sportsmanship, underscored.
From the third grade, your child participates in Peck’s invigorating team sports, even as she develops individual discipline and personal perseverance. She also learns the importance of collaboration, of winning humbly and losing gracefully, and the courage to lead and the humility to follow—whether to her own teammates and coaches, but to every opponent she faces.

Opportunities, optimized.
Our enriching values and evolving methods prepare your child to go anywhere from here: to shine in the most competitive secondary school, to thrive at a prestigious college, and to flourish in a meaningful career. Peck graduates distinguish themselves by creating lives of courage and consequence—all while preserving their loyalty to the guiding principles of hard work and fair play we instill at The Peck School.
The Peck School, defined.

Academics, invigorated.

We offer your child both academic roots and intellectual wings. Here she builds a foundational repository of time-honored knowledge while also developing forward-looking dexterity as a problem-solver, design-thinker, and collaborator. Along the way, she learns to focus her efforts, take personal responsibility for her academic success, and feel an abiding joy in discovery.
Messaging vehicles

Website home page rotation
timeless traditions
timely transformation

At The Peck School, we meld a proven curriculum with modern methods—and she discovers the pure delight of creative thinking and active learning.

K–8 independent education in the heart of Morristown, New Jersey

APPLY NOW
values revitalized

We cultivate respectful behavior alongside real relationships—and he learns to meet a changing world confidently, kindly, and joyfully.

K–8 independent education in the heart of Morristown, New Jersey

APPLY NOW
inquiry energized

We help your child build sound academic foundations—by facilitating active learning, exciting projects, collaboration, creativity, and truly joyful discovery.

K-8 independent education in the heart of Morristown, New Jersey

APPLY NOW
childhood honored

We are a community where he can grow into his full potential without growing up too soon.

K-8 independent education in the heart of Morristown, New Jersey

APPLY NOW
Messaging vehicles

Print & digital advertising
What is the right school for your child right now?

The Peck School, where he grows as a thinker, a maker, a leader, a citizen, and a friend—all without growing up too soon.

K-8 reconsidered

THE Peck SCHOOL

peckschool.org | 873.319.3600
What is the right school for your child right now?

The Peck School, where she grows as a thinker, a maker, a leader, a citizen, and a friend—all without growing up too soon.
What prepares her better: firm foundations or flexible thinking?

At The Peck School, your child develops both. We meld a proven curriculum with modern methods—and she discovers the pure delight of creative thinking and active learning.
Where can a firm handshake lead your child?

At The Peck School, we cultivate respectful behavior alongside real relationships—and he learns to meet a changing world confidently, kindly, and joyfully.
Reading, Writing and Belly Breathing: The Importance of Yoga and Meditation in School

BY LISA L. COLANGELO

Published: April 3, 2017

Teachers and students throughout New Jersey are turning to yoga, meditation and other methods of mindfulness to enhance their classroom experiences and ward off stress. The practices are being used across all grade levels.

Experts say even pre-kindergarten students can reap the benefits of learning how to sit quietly and focus on their breathing. “I explain to educators that these are tools to prime the brain for learning,” says Allison Morgan, founder of Montvale-based Zensation Kids, which has trained thousands of educators throughout the country and internationally.

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MINDFUL MEDITATION

Second-grade teacher Lisa Sargent starts every day in her class with a three-minute meditation. The kids find their places on the carpet, sit cross-legged, close their eyes and cup their hands onto their knees.

"It's the most beautiful thing to witness," says Sargent, who teaches in Ridgewood. But she admits, getting second graders to sit quietly is a process. "We start with one minute at the beginning of the year," she says. "You need to have a lot of trust to do the practice, so if they don't want to close their eyes I tell them to gaze down." Sargent gently guides them through the breathing, reminding them to relax their shoulders and keep their spines straight.

The response from her students has been overwhelmingly positive. One even brought a singing bowl, a type of bell used to promote relaxation, to share with the class and use during meditation. "What the meditation does is set the tone for the entire day," she explains. "At the end of the three minutes, I always thank them for their energy and effort."

Sargent has also seen students use the relaxation techniques to better manage squabbles. "One student was upset because another student made a comment to him," she says. "He was able to maintain his anger by focusing on getting himself calm. If that happened at the beginning of the year, he would've just spiraled and not been able to let it go."

Even Sesame Street has touted the benefits of mindfulness. One musical segment on the beloved television show features Grammy-award winners Common and Colbie Caillat teaching Elmo to belly breathe as a way to calm his inner monster.

THE BENEFITS OF BRAIN BREAKS

Darren Peterson, superintendent of schools in Montvale, started incorporating mindfulness into the curriculum five years ago. Teachers use yoga movements and mindfulness activities during "brain breaks" throughout the day. Kindergarten students participate in yoga on an ongoing basis, he adds.
Capital Campaign

Up-leveling while maintaining continuity
Since our founding as Miss Sutphen's School in 1893, The Peck School has maintained a commitment to excellence through our challenging academic program, thoughtful character education, welcoming atmosphere, and incomparable preparation for secondary school, college, and career.

More than a century later, we still provide knowledge guided by our unchanging values.

And now, we prepare new generations of Peck students to succeed in altogether new contexts—to make their places in a globally oriented and rapidly changing world.

For the benefit of every student we presently serve and all those we welcome in the future, the time is now to build on the strong foundations of our campus and our traditions, to clear space for innovation, inspiration, and ingenuity, and to elevate the enduring excellence of The Peck School.
Making space(s) for integrated and inspired learning

Some things never change: the influence of great literature. The principles of algebra. The importance of consideration for others. For more than 100 years, The Peck School curriculum has provided academic rigor, instilled intellectual maturity, and encouraged empathy in our students—and today we continue to ground a Peck education in these central concerns.

However, we also seek to meet today’s young minds where they are—immersed in an information age when no fact is more than a few keystrokes away.
Therefore, we must equip our students with new skills, including the dynamic intellectual know-how they need to negotiate the demands of an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

The Peck Promise Campaign seeks to create the adaptive, connected instructional spaces we require for active learning and direct discovery, including:

- Updated early learning spaces, including versatile classrooms and common areas in our Kindergarten building and improvements to the F.M. Kirby Lower School—to enhance the areas in which our youngest students thrive as collaborative thinkers, hands-on learners, and problem solvers from their first days at Peck.
- New science classrooms for all of our students from K-8, including state-of-the-art upper school labs in the Eckert-Huff building, as well as a new Idea & Design Lab and an enhanced robotics and engineering space—to facilitate an expanded STEAM program and support continually updated, truly transformative instructional technologies.
Sustaining a transformative school culture

At The Peck School, our students drive all we do. For more than a century, we have shaped a closely knit, warmly welcoming school community around them, so that difference while instilling shared values. The Peck Promise Campaign enhances and energizes our unified school culture by attracting families from across the region and enriching our students’ educational experiences by ensuring more meaningful bonds with their educators, their classmates, and their communities.

The new Peck Commons lies at the heart of both our campus and our commitment to all members of this inclusive, involved school family. This project enhances the day-to-day experience of every student by creating a new dining hall, a large multipurpose room, and an expanded outdoor play area. It also creates space for fresh approaches to learning—including new music classrooms, an outdoor music terrace, and an InDeCoLe Lab.

And by creating dedicated indoor and outdoor spaces where all members of the Peck community can meet to connect, to celebrate, and to collaborate. The Peck Commons allows us to mark defining moments and work toward collective goals together. In building The Peck Commons, we seek to:

- Create a place for shared experiences by constructing a multipurpose gathering and performance space—where Peck families have ample room to come together for assemblies, class performances, and formative community-building moments like World Cultures evenings, Karos events, the eighth-grade play and the Upper School musical.
- Build on our long-standing family-style dining tradition by constructing a new dining hall and kitchen—to create a more comfortable and practical dining room, facilitate healthier meal plans, and foster warm, meaningful connections at every shared meal.
The moment to support The Peck Promise

Early and generous support has allowed The Peck School to accelerate many aspects of this project. Now, we seek your help to complete the full arc of the work in the next 18 months, in a manner that prepares Peck for the future with minimal disruption to our students’ present learning experience. With your support, The Peck Promise Campaign can make the most of our historic campus and equip our students, teachers, and families for tomorrow.

What matters most is this moment—and the steps we take here and now to honor those who came before us and provide for those who will follow.

Your contribution to The Peck Promise Campaign allows us to make these vital investments in our curriculum, our campus, and our students. And your partnership with Peck stands as an enduring part of your legacy—a gift that continues giving year after year, an investment that pays dividends for generations. With your help, The Peck School leads generations of graduates to success in both academic and personal, instilling them with our enduring values and preparing them for an ever-evolving world.
Reimagining our Campus:
Honoring local history, cultivating community
Outcomes
Outcomes

- Record high inquiries in 2019-20
- Record high applications in 2019-20
- 83% yield
- All-time high enrollment for 2019-20 academic year
- Continued low all-school attrition
- The story is sticking and spreading...
Lindenwold Basement (2016)
Osborn Idea & Design Lab (Lower School)
7th & 8th Grade Commons
Old Gym Assembly/Performance Space
The Peck Commons: Multipurpose Space
Past Dining/Kitchen Areas

1978

1990

Dining Hall Construction

1994
The Peck Commons: Dining Room
Parents Association Quad
Exercise part 2
Exercise part 2

1. Transfer each of your rituals and traditions to the appropriate bucket: retain, alter/evolve, or sunset.

2. Fill in the why.

3. Turn to the person next to you and share your list, categorizations, and whys.
Lessons learned
Andy’s takeaways

Constructive change, especially to traditions, requires community buy-in.

• The community must trust the head of school.

• That takes time and effort—listening and learning, diagnosing, refining customs, and respecting culture.
Traditions are rooted in complex emotions and their significance is not always clear at first glance.

• It’s important to understand which traditions are more emotionally loaded than others.

• What you think might be an innocent tweak to a minor tradition could end up being much more consequential.
Andy’s takeaways

Every community has its limits.

• Understand and respect your community’s thresholds and honor your school’s unique culture—which often requires putting their needs before your personal preferences.

• Be prepared to alternate roles from change agent to keeper of traditions.
Shelly’s takeaways

Messaging changes, especially in tradition-invested schools, often requires outside perspective.

• School leaders can benefit from the observations of an objective third party.

• Teachers, students, and parents can sometimes speak more openly (and evocatively) to outsiders.
Shelly’s takeaways

School identities are rooted in a complex system of official and unofficial communications—and their effectiveness and accuracy isn’t always clear.

• It’s important to pull all your narrative threads together and objectively examine the patterns they create.

• What seems like a clear explanation or compelling case to insiders might be puzzling to external audiences.
Shelly’s takeaways

Every community has its context.

• An outside partner can help schools understand the changing needs of their local markets while taking a clear-eyed look at the messaging strategies of their competitors.

• Your outside partner can also contextualize each school’s individual strategy within national trends and widespread demographic and enrollment changes.
The most important lesson learned...

People respond to authenticity.

• Internal audiences are grateful when they see themselves faithfully reflected in new messaging.

• External prospects can appreciate a complex and layered school identity—so long as it is compellingly and clearly explained.
Questions?