Our Mission

"Newark Academy will contribute to the world engaged individuals instilled with a passion for learning, a standard of excellence, and a generosity of spirit."

This mission statement, approved last year by our Board of Trustees, sets our institutional course and reminds us of our long-term goals at Newark Academy. Such school mission statements are not easy to compose; they must be crafted broadly enough to be meaningful and aspirational, while remaining true to the distinctive identity of the school. We believe that this one-sentence statement successfully distills the singular identity and values of Newark Academy.

First and foremost, we intend our graduates to be “engaged individuals.” Newark Academy must serve every student by providing each of them with opportunities to participate in and contribute to our school community, both as a rewarding end in itself and as an apprenticeship to becoming productive, engaged members of society. We intend also that our students emerge from our halls more confident in their individuality. I often tell prospective families that while we are academically rigorous, we are not a cookie-cutter school. Instead, we have long celebrated the personalities and idiosyncrasies of our teachers and students. We are all the richer for them.

In our admissions process at Newark Academy, we look for academic achievement and potential in our applicants, but we are also searching for signs that they are curious about their world and enjoy learning. Once accepted, those students find themselves with teachers who strive to awaken in them a genuine “passion for learning” that transcends skill acquisition, success on standardized tests, and college admission. This phrase in our mission statement reflects the values of the Enlightenment – knowledge and the pursuit of it provide incalculable benefits to both society and the individual.

The “standard of excellence” cited in the mission statement is one that each Newark Academy student internalizes and makes his or her own, thanks to their range of experiences here. Those experiences comprise challenging courses under the guidance of superb teachers, as well as participation in teams, bands and theater troupes, immersion experiences, and leadership roles. The bar is held high in every endeavor, and ultimately, the students hold it high for themselves. This standard of excellence also carries over into the development of qualities of character, such as honesty, integrity, fairness, and resilience, which are of chief importance in our school community and beyond.

Surely the most ambitious element of what we aspire to instill in students is a “generosity of spirit.” To set that goal for self-absorbed adolescents, in a society where Me is king, may seem naïvely idealistic, but the truth is that our students do absorb this aspect of our school culture and are more generous of spirit than most. Our programs teach them that service to others is a vital aspect of community life; student-run clubs help disadvantaged and suffering people all over the world, students perform required community service outside of school, and faculty witness innumerable acts of kindness within the building. True generosity of spirit must be practiced over many years to take hold, but there is ample evidence that the practice of service inculcates values of compassion and generosity that can endure over a lifetime.

Engaged individuals with a passion for learning, an internalized standard of excellence, and a generosity of spirit – these are the kinds of students we hope to send out into the world. The academic content of an education here is assumed; the mission statement expresses our most essential goals, those that lie at the heart of an education at Newark Academy. Because the best kind of education does more than fill a mind with facts; it forms the character as well.