

# SOAR

THE PRENTICE SCHOOL MAGAZINE

FALL 2019

## INSPIRED EDUCATION

CREATING NEW PATHS FOR STUDENTS

## IN-SCHOOL THERAPY

HELPING KIDS COPE AT SCHOOL

## INVESTING WITH PURPOSE

MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE





**Devon Green**  
Head of School

# CHANGING LIVES FOREVER

As the Head of School for The Prentice School, I get the privilege and the honor of meeting all of our families first. Many come to us vulnerable from a less-than-ideal experience in a traditional educational environment. They want to be hopeful, but have been told “everything will be fine” before. I know where they are starting from and know where Prentice can lead them. I’ve seen hundreds of students move through our program and become the life-long learners they were always meant to be. Without being encumbered, our students flourish in our nurturing and inclusive environment.

Since I became Head of School in March 2018, I have focused on making The Prentice School a best-in-class private school. Our students enjoy small group Orton-Gillingham structured literacy, reading and writing, On Cloud 9 math training, next-generation science programs in our dedicated science rooms, social studies, music, art, PE, dance... a full day that is meticulously scheduled and focused on bringing out the best from our students in an environment that eclipses traditional education.

The fact remains that 1 in 5 students has some form of learning difference and yet, only a handful of schools across the United States will have the tools to help them.

The Prentice School is here to change that perspective.

It’s time to show these kids that they can **SOAR!**

## Fighting For Our Children

The Prentice School started in 1986 with a small contingent of families and professionals who knew that their children with dyslexia deserved more than what traditional schools were able to provide.

The startling facts are that, even today, if a child doesn’t learn to read by the 4th grade, they will have increased chances of drug addiction and incarceration.

Yet, just like 33 years ago, we find that most traditional schools, public and private, are unprepared to assist the 20% of students that come to them with learning disabilities.

Moreover, we’re finding that half of these students have co-occurring issues including multiple learning disorders, ADD/ADHD and social anxiety, making their path to learning less about following the straight and narrow path and more about individualized teaching.

The Prentice School has built a program that teaches children in the way they learn. It combines multi-sensory with small group dynamics. Our small groups give our students a sense of community. They feel a sense of belonging and they support and encourage each other.

Our 6.6 acre campus is the perfect blend of classrooms, fields and outdoor activity space. At lunch and breaks, kids are playing football in the quad, basketball at the courts, climbing the jungle gym in the playground or simply hanging out and playing a board game in The Eagles Nest, our upper grade and teen lounge.

Since 1986, our passion for these children and students has never wavered and we look forward to the next 33 years of adding students to our Prentice family.

## PRENTICE HISTORY

### Newport Community School



With an initial focus on students who struggled to read, Prentice opened its doors as The Newport Community School with two teachers and 25 students in a small four room building.

By the following year, a growing enrollment necessitated a move to a bigger campus.

### Prentice Day School



With the new location came a new name, Prentice Day School, to honor a founding benefactor.

By 1990, enrollment reached 120 students, with others on a waiting list. It was evident that Prentice was meeting the needs of an underserved community of learners and that a more spacious campus was needed.

### The Prentice School



In 1993, Prentice relocated to its current site – a 6.6 acre school campus in North Tustin, CA.

In 1997, the school officially changed its name to The Prentice School.

33 years later, The Prentice School has maintained a standard of excellence and has established a reputation as a premiere alternative education institution for children with learning differences in the United States.



# The Prentice Approach

How our programs **adjust** based on our students’ learning needs.

The Prentice School offers a unique program that gives students a true campus and classroom experience combined with leveled, small group core instruction. This “Prentice Approach” is one where our students’ learning environment adjusts based on their learning needs.

Like a traditional educational environment, our students enjoy their own grade-level homeroom teacher and classroom. However, The Prentice School strategically places students into smaller, leveled instructional groups for most core content areas. Within these groups, our teachers use a variety of strategies to enhance student learner outcomes. Teachers regularly implement Lindamood-Bell strategies for math and comprehension.

As a school for students with language-based learning differences, Orton-Gillingham (OG) is an integral part of our school day. Orton-Gillingham, the core of our program, was created in the 1930’s as an explicit, phonics-based, multi-sensory approach to teaching students letters and sounds. Because it teaches in several different modalities - visual, kinesthetic and auditory - it’s a perfect match to the complex learning needs of our students. At Prentice, we organized our student body into 5 person, similarly leveled, Structured Literacy pods so students can receive more targeted Orton-Gillingham daily instruction. Not only does this make for a more effective and results-driven learning experience, it creates a sense of belonging, acceptance and reduces anxiety.



The goal of our 65-step sequential Orton Gillingham program is to guide all students through this progression, starting from Step 1. Every small group instructor has been trained and certified by the International Dyslexia Association in the Orton-Gillingham Approach (which takes 12-18 months to complete). To achieve better learning results, each individual OG instructor creates daily custom curriculum that is contextual to the individuals in their groups.

Being a full 6.6 acre campus, The Prentice School offers more than just interventional tutoring. Whole classrooms move to their next-generation science, PE, music, art and technology classes together, creating a dynamic learning environment. Additionally, all students take recess and lunch at the same time, which encourages socialization.

The Prentice Approach has revolutionized our school. It allows our students to learn in groups and environments that is built around them, leading to higher success rates.

DID YOU KNOW?

90%

of children with reading difficulties will achieve grade level in reading if they receive structured literacy support by the 1st grade

# Creating a Self-Sufficient Culture

Prentice Launches an **Executive Function** pilot program

You know the scene... the chaotic morning with a misplaced backpack, forgetful chores, and a last minute scramble to finish homework. Sound familiar?

We all want what is best for our children, but more importantly, we want our children to be successful problem solvers and self-reliant adults. So what prevents many of our smart but disorganized students from attaining these goals? The answer is executive function skills.

Students with learning disabilities often present with deficits in the executive processes of the brain or executive function skills. These skills refer to the complex cognitive processes that enable us to regulate our behavior, and set and achieve flexible, realistic goals. More specifically, they include cognitive flexibility, goal setting, task initiation, organizing and prioritizing, working memory, self-monitoring and self-checking. Students with weak executive function skills often appear disorganized, forgetful, and often are easily distracted when initiating and completing tasks, especially those that require multiple steps.

Executive function skills are an essential component to promoting academic success among students, yet they are rarely explicitly taught in traditional class settings. To create a classroom culture that promotes the use of executive function strategies, Prentice has developed a scaffolded approach to teaching that extends from upper elementary through junior high. A systematic executive function pilot program was launched in the 6th grade using research based methods from Research ILLD’s online executive function curriculum, SMARTS, as well as strategies and tools from renowned psychologist Peg Dawson’s Smart But

Scattered program. Strategies and tools are more easily generalized through a daily Executive Function period at the end of each school day. During this time, students work together to apply learned strategies to their classwork, homework, and collaborative activities.

One of the most important skills to develop as a student is metacognition, or thinking of one’s own thinking. By standing back and taking a birds-eye view of their learning, students become self-aware of their strengths and challenges and can more easily evaluate how well they are doing and make adjustments as they go. Using the MetaCOG survey tool from the SMARTS program, students are able to self-reflect on their effort, persistence, and strategy use to assist teachers in gaining a better understanding of their student’s views of themselves. These surveys also help teachers understand their own views of their student’s performance, as well.

“When teachers can compare their own views with their students’ self-perceptions, they can more readily reach all students,” states Monika Matuszak, 6th grade teacher and Elementary Department Chair. “This level of engagement teaches our students to ‘learn how to learn,’ over the course of the school year.”

Our teachers work hand-in-hand with the students to discuss their MetaCOG results, providing increased self-awareness and encouraging them to be part of the goal setting process. At the end of the 2019-2020 school year, students will be tested again and they will be able to review their results and improvements. Following the pilot, in the 2020-21 school year, our Executive Function programs and strategies will be embedded into grades 2 - 8.



- Accessing Working Memory
- Cognitive Flexibility
- Self Monitoring/ Self Checking
- Goal Setting
- Organizing & Prioritizing



# THE NEW AGE OF THERAPY

We brought on a full-time MFT and it changed our students.

It was a particularly rough morning. He was tired and emotional and his anxiety was at an all-time high. He didn't even want to get into the car for the drive to school. By the time he made it to school, panic and anger complemented his anxiety. It was going to be a rough day.

At Prentice, we view our students' mental well-being as a critical gateway to their ability to learn. Negative self-thought and perception can become a barrier to learning. The most effective way to remove that barrier is to have a professional speak with them. At Prentice, students are able to process experiences in the moment. They have an open door policy with a therapist who can guide them and help navigate the complexities of life as a student with learning differences.

"Our students experience pressure and anxiety similar to what adults experience", noted Stephanie Ware, Prentice's marriage and family therapist. "In fact, due to the fact that they come to us from places where they were commonly ostracized by their peers or even bullied, we have to re-build their self-worth."

Students who meet with Mrs. Ware are able to discuss presenting concerns and work on solutions that will help and guide them. If she feels additional assistance is needed to solve a concern, she will work with the student's parents to provide alternate avenues of support and professional guidance.

"Some students just need someone to be present with them in the moment", Mrs. Ware notes. "When students struggle with learning disabilities, they are very hard on themselves. I meet them where they are at instead of expecting something unrealistic of them." "I am here to help them understand their differences make them unique, creative, and just as capable to learn in their own way as their peers."



In addition to drop in or scheduled visits during school, Mrs. Ware conducts a junior high advisory class twice a week that meets by grade-level as a group. Students are provided psychoeducation and taught life skills. Interpersonal issues inside the group of students can be discussed in a non-judgmental forum.

"My goal is for the students to learn from each other as a group. To be able to learn to step back and evaluate, 'What are my thoughts' and 'How are my thoughts influencing my emotions and behavior?'" stated Mrs. Ware. "The goal is to give them tools they can use for the rest of their lives."

Student need for therapy services is evaluated on an individual basis. Students are evaluated based on the impact concerns have on their ability to be successful in school. If an educational need is determined, there is no additional charge for the Prentice School's student on-site therapy services.

## DID YOU KNOW?

# 80%

of children and teens with anxiety disorders do not receive treatment



## Welcome Stephanie Ware, MFT

Stephanie Ware, MFT, joined The Prentice School in August 2019. She is a California Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and has been working in the field since 2001.

She earned a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from California State University, Long Beach; and a Master's degree in Psychology from Chapman University, with an emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy. She earned a license as a Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) in 2007.

Over the last seventeen years, she has worked with students in various educational settings including individual counseling/guidance, collaboration with school staff, collaboration with family, consultation with other professionals, and connecting students to outside resources.

As an Educationally Related Mental Health Services Clinician, she frequently met with students at school for individual services and was responsible for creating treatment plans, designing student and family goals, teaching skills, creating behavior plans, attending IEPs, and providing parent support and guidance.

She has worked with clients in schools, a group home, county contracted agency, and private practice. In addition to working with clients, has been teaching in higher education since 2007 and training therapists since 2012.



# INVESTING WITH PURPOSE

At The Prentice School, we know that each student who learns differently is full of possibilities. This is why our school is so important! As is true for all private schools, tuition alone does not cover the costs of running the school. Our Annual Giving Fund makes up a critical portion of the operating budget, ensuring that each student has everything needed to achieve their full potential.

Our students come to us needing support and they leave us as dreamers... for the first time in their lives, open to the thought that they can succeed and excel.

Please join our cause and experience the many rewards that come with being part of the Prentice community and invest in our school by participating in our Annual Giving Campaign. Your tax-deductible charitable gift to The Prentice School's Annual Giving Fund goes directly to this year's operating budget to support:

- **Academics**
- **The Arts**
- **Science**
- **Technology**
- **Scholarships**
- **Professional Development**
- **Campus Improvements & Security**

Your contribution is also a powerful statement to foundations and corporations as they make decisions about supporting the school through grants. Strong participation signals to foundations that our community is invested in the school, which increases our chance of receiving outside funding.

## Double the Power of Your Gift

### EMPLOYER DONATION MATCH IS A GREAT WAY TO GIVE

A matching gift from your company is a great way to maximize your donation. Many companies will double, or even triple, charitable gifts to our school. Contact your employer to see if they participate in a matching gift program.

Your company's name will be listed in our recognition materials and you will be recognized for the value of your gift including the match amount.



Support The Prentice School at **Prentice.org/Donate**



# SAVE THE DATE

2020 Education Reimagined Gala

*Expanding Our Horizons*

Saturday, April 18, 2020

Newport Beach  
Country Club

# PLANTING SEEDS

## How will you build your legacy for the next generation?

Through your commitment, you can help to ensure that The Prentice School's future is secure. Join the **Prentice Legacy Society** Today!

The Prentice Legacy Society recognizes and honors those who have included The Prentice School in their estate plans with a future gift through a bequest, life insurance, trust arrangement, or have made an out-right gift to Prentice. The Prentice Legacy Society is the acknowledgment circle created to recognize individuals who have advised Prentice in writing they have made Prentice a beneficiary in their estate planning.

The most important benefit you will receive from joining the Legacy Society is the satisfaction derived from making a lasting contribution to the long-term success of the school. Additional benefits include recognition in our newsletter publication, annual events, and the knowledge that your giving may inspire generosity in others.

A planned gift involves the transfer of assets affecting the distribution of one's estate. Gifts of this type enable a donor to make significant gifts beyond their current income and can provide significant tax benefits.

For more information, contact Corinne Conklin, Director of Development, at 714-538-4511 (x214) or cconklin@prentice.org. The school strongly suggests that you consult your financial planner, tax advisor, and attorney before finalizing any gifts.



# THANK YOU KINDLY!

**IN-KIND DONATIONS SAVE US THOUSANDS PER YEAR.**

**BEHR PAINTS** for supplying us with paint for our campus beautification project.

**EXPERIAN** for donating 50 computer monitors for students and teachers.

Gifts and donations of goods and services such as computers, musical instruments, art supplies, sports equipment, construction services and supplies make a huge difference to our school!

*The school retains the right to not accept gifts that cannot be made use of or that would be costly to maintain or store.*



# PRENTICE EAGLES TAKING FLIGHT



**RYAN RAFFO**  
2004

Ryan Raffo attended The Prentice School from 1999 to 2004. He transferred from Prentice to Laguna Beach High School and graduated in 2010. He credits Prentice as the foundation for his success. He graduated with honors and was awarded “All CIF Academic Athlete” maintaining a 3.88 GPA. After high school, he was recruited by The United States Merchant Marine Academy for football and was class president. In February of his senior year he was accepted into the Navy Flight program!

In July of 2014 he reported to Pensacola, Florida to begin Flight School. From there he was transferred to the Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, TX. Ryan had been selected for the Navy’s jet program in late 2015. He received the aviators “Wings of Gold” and was advanced on to fly the F-18 Hornet. Later that month Ryan was assigned to the VFA-34

“The Blue Blasters” squadron where he trained on the USS Carl Vinson and learned the protocol of landings and takeoffs. In early 2019 Ryan was offered a volunteer deployment with the VFA-134 “The Pukin Dogs” squadron. This 7-month deployment afforded him much more flight time aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln CVN-72 carrier. While on the Lincoln, he participated in Operation Freedom Sentinel which involved in country flights over Afghanistan.

Ryan is currently in transit back to his home squadron VFA-34 at NAS Oceana in Virginia Beach, VA. He will be with The Blue Blasters for another 2-3 years with the possibility with another deployment.

To quote Ryan directly, “I’m living my ultimate dream, flying gray jets off the decks of aircraft carriers.”

**COOPER BIRD**  
2011

Cooper attended Prentice third through eight grade. He graduated from Futures Academy in 2015. He attended the University of Arizona and later transferred to the Culinary Lab Cooking School in hopes of following his passion of becoming a chef. After graduating he completed his internship at Chapter One in Santa Ana as a Line and Pastry Cook. Currently he’s cooking at the Craft House in Dana Point. In his free time, he enjoys playing hockey and golfing with his fellow line cooks. Prentice helped Cooper discover his strengths and the confidence to think “outside the box” in pursuing a career where his “hands on” creativity can be showcased.



**MYKAYLA HARRIS**  
2007

Mykayla graduated from Villa Park High School where she played basketball for four years. She received her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Cal State University, Monterey Bay, where she played basketball as well. In 2018, she received her Master of Business Administration from the University of La Verne. Mykayla is now working as an Assistant Director for Academic Services and Compliance at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia.



**ANGELA GERBER**  
2017

Angela attended a charter school for 8th grade where she took high school and college courses. She began Speech and Debate and competed at Nationals in 2018 despite her dyslexia and speech impediment. She graduated first in her class and was valedictorian. In 9th grade she earned over a 4.0 GPA while taking honors and college courses. This year, Angela is in 10th grade and she has successfully completed 28 college units. She continues to compete in Speech and Debate in hopes of attending nationals. Nevertheless, her personal struggles have made her consider supporting other kids with LD’s as a special education lawyer.







Success for Students  
Who LEARN Differently

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