



Educating Your Family on Today's Contemporary School Options

BY PAIGE HACHET JACOB

Wake County is fortunate to have accomplished and highly respected schools, both in the private and public sectors. With the range of choices in this area, selecting a school for your child can be daunting. Many parents want their child well-educated and well-rounded as they head into a rapidly changing world and prepare for college. With that, the role of intramural athletics, extracurricular programs, and clubs available become

essential components when selecting the right fit for your family.

Explore just a sample of the flexibility and array of programs many Wake County schools offer to find a natural fit for your student that helps prepare them for life after grades K-12.

MODERN EDUCATION WITH FLEXIBLE ELECTIVES

In the public school realm, magnet programs offer choices with personalized

learning through four primary pathways: daily electives in visual and performing arts, science, math, reading and sports; leadership and technology including project- and problem-based learning through the use of emerging technologies; an International Baccalaureate (IB) whole child instruction that supports global learning; as well as an early college preparatory curriculum with credits that are transferrable to universities within the UNC system.

West Millbrook Magnet Middle School

is new to the magnet program for the 2018-19 school year, offering a real-world IB Programme that helps students learn to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners. Expanded course offerings not found in traditional middle schools include three world languages (Chinese, French and Spanish), a variety of dance and visual arts options, theatre/musical theatre, band and orchestra. There are several clubs and a full complement of athletics to choose from as well, with students having the opportunity to engage in a class or extracurricular activity—or both. For example, a student might take dance during the school day and participate in dance troupe after school. Conversely, they might not take dance during the day but still opt to be involved after school.

As another example, Carroll Magnet Middle School offers challenge-based learning through a Leadership in Technology program that produce critical thinkers, digital engineers and entrepreneurs through a focus on meaningful tech (think 3D printer and VR technology) and Covey's 7 Habits. In addition to intramurals, their curriculum includes courses in Project Lead the Way (computer sciences, coding, app creation); Future Cities (engineering design, planning processes); Discovery Time (week-long micro courses incorporated into the bell schedule that

engage students through choice and autonomy); and a STEM coach who leads an all-girl coding club and boys' robotics club.

When it comes to private schools, students and parents may go this route based on religion, the desire for single-sex education, calendar options, or perhaps a curriculum design not offered anywhere else. Like the magnet programs, the range of extracurricular options at these schools fosters a love of learning and diverse student interests.

Saint Mary's believes in the greatness of girls. Established in 1842, this private, all-girls, Episcopal boarding and day school offers an environment where girls can immerse themselves in learning both in and out of the classroom. The school's innovative college-preparatory curriculum includes AP classes, world languages, and cutting-edge electives; and its location in downtown Raleigh gives girls access to valuable real-world experiences through internships and community partnerships.

Because girls do best when they have choices, Saint Mary's offers a wide range of extracurricular activities to supplement academics. A robust arts program with art, theatre, music and dance courses as well as annual theatre productions, dance and choral concerts, student art exhibits, and more means girls find new and creative



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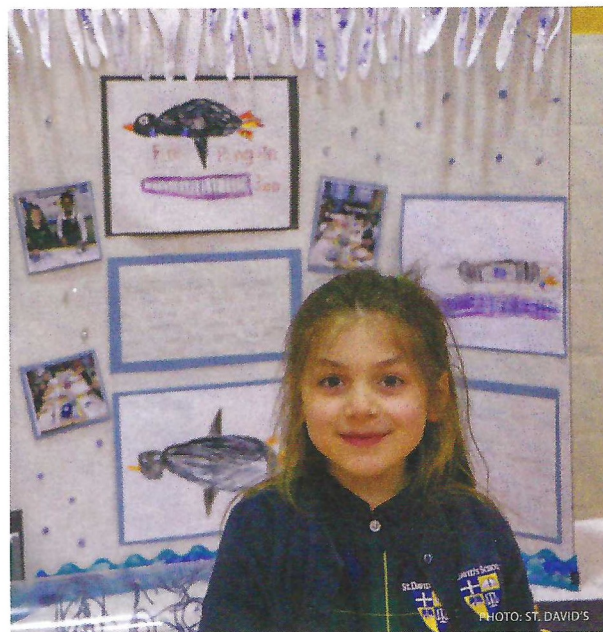
ways to express themselves and connect with their world. Three seasons of 11 sports mean ample opportunities for student-athletes to experience one for the first time, or continue with an old favorite—all while learning about leadership, sportsmanship and being a team player. Participation in the more than 30 student-run clubs and organizations gives girls ways to expand their boundaries, grow as leaders and find their most authentic voices. From a Model United Nations, Science Olympiad, and environmental club, to the human rights alliance, and special-interest

clubs like photography, personal finance, and scuba—the range of clubs reflects the diversity of interests found in Saint Mary's student body. These extracurricular offerings help make Saint Mary's a vibrant learning and living community where girls learn, grow, and thrive.

One of Raleigh Christian Academy's (RCA) primary desires is to produce academically, athletically, socially, and spiritually well-rounded students. To achieve this goal, the private school offers a variety of intramural athletics and extracurriculars. Fine arts and music, including piano, voice,

and band, are taught within the school day. In addition, all elementary grades are given a music appreciation lesson once a week to introduce them to music and instruments. All grades are given the opportunity to showcase their talents in a fine arts festival in which they compete for individual and group honors. RCA views music as a lifelong passion and encourages students to continue using their talents in their local churches and beyond.

Lessons in sportsmanship and leadership begin early at RCA. The school's varsity basketball athletes host "mini" ball





games with the 4th and 5th grade students. Varsity players “coach” the younger students who thereby learn to experience competition. In October, RCA will also host its 37th Invitational Field Day to compete against other area Christian schools. The day-long event helps students learn the value of school spirit, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

St. David’s Innovations Warriors program incorporates STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) into their curriculum throughout all grade levels. This year, St. David’s will open an innovation lab to give students and teachers access to a creation laboratory where they can apply classroom concepts into experiments and real-life applications. Students of all ages will utilize the lab—whether it’s for a project in the lower school’s Inventors and Their Inventions science fair, the middle school’s Shark Tank inventors program, or an upper school science class.

Their fine arts program strives to cultivate a different sense of wonder

and creativity, featuring a robust theatre program that spans grades PK-12. Curriculum offerings include Voice and the Stage for middle school students and theatre electives in the upper school program. Also, St. David’s stages three extracurricular theatre productions each year: a fall play featuring middle and upper school students; a winter musical which showcases students of all ages; and a spring lower school musical that highlights the talents of the youngest students. And if acting isn’t your child’s cup of tea, there are opportunities to participate behind the scenes in set construction and technical direction, or as part of the performance crew working in areas like hair and makeup, costuming, multimedia and videography.

POISED FOR THE FUTURE

Wake County’s innovative options stand poised to prepare and nurture your student as they carve their individual path toward a rapidly advancing future. According to

Wake County Economic Development, we are a “smart” community, meaning that the combination of top universities and an abundance of job opportunities makes Wake a magnet for smart people. Our residents and local leaders understand the value of a quality education, which is why Wake County has one of the top performing school systems—public and private—in the nation.

When it comes to deciding where your child will be the most at home, visit your shortlist of schools and ask the teachers lots of questions, read school profiles, and then make the best decision based upon your family, your values, and most importantly your child. 🌟

After taking a break from the writing profession and working in various positions, Paige took the plunge and recently returned to freelance in order to pursue her love of writing. She lives in Apex with her husband and two sons. When she’s not searching for a writing gig, Paige stays busy keeping up with her family. In her downtime, she usually has her nose in a good mystery book or tries her luck cooking healthy recipes in an attempt to convince her boys that broccoli tastes great.