

SRQ MAGAZINE LEADERS IN EDUCATION • MAY 2014

# LEADERS IN EDUCATION

ROUNDTABLE



The Leaders in Education Roundtable celebrates the schools and educators who are working to inspire, educate and engage students each day. We spoke with educators from schools in the area and asked them to share their philosophies, teaching methods and curriculum for preparing students for the future. Copy by Jay McManemon. Photos by Evan Sigmund.

## CENTER MONTESSORI SCHOOL

MARA FULK, ADMINISTRATOR



### HOW DO YOU INSPIRE, EDUCATE AND ENGAGE CHILDREN EVERYDAY?

One of the primary ways that we inspire our students is through individualized attention. The Montessori method addresses the individual child wherever that child is developmentally, emotionally, academically, and physically. Unlike traditional teaching methods where children are taught the same curriculum at the same time, the benefit of the Montessori method is that each child is given an individual lesson plan within the group, as well as a group lesson plan. Over time, the child is observed and evaluated by the teacher. The teacher then creates a subsequent lesson plan that meets the child where he is and follows the child's interests and abilities throughout the school year. Each child is in one classroom environment for three years, which provides the child and teacher the opportunity to develop a relationship in a community-like setting. This gives the child a very secure place to learn as well as an unlimited opportunity to progress academically. As a young child enters the three-year classroom, she observes how the older children act and behave, which gives her intrinsic motivation to challenge herself to get to that level. Additionally, as the older child progresses she is able to mentor the younger children. One of the Montessori beliefs is that if an older child can teach a concept, that older child has truly learned the concept. These are some of the many ways that we individualize education, open up the possibilities for advancement, and inspire children on a daily basis.

“We believe that if we can teach children to love to learn at a very young age, it will follow them throughout their education process and help them gain the confidence, independence and the drive to succeed in life.”

### Center Montessori School

6024 26th St W, Bradenton, FL 34207

Phone: 941.753.4987 • [www.centermontessori.org](http://www.centermontessori.org)

Center Montessori School is committed to the Montessori Method of education and every classroom is specially equipped with didactic Montessori materials. These manipulative materials make it possible for children to learn by doing rather than by being told. The materials are age appropriate and are intended to be presented to children in order to enhance their learning and awareness, first of simple concepts, and later of complicated academic ideas. In addition to these very beautiful materials, each classroom is under the direction of a certified Montessori teacher who knows the function of these materials, understands how children learn, is adept at observing and interpreting children and their work, and is prepared to meet the educational needs of each child on an individual basis. In addition to the Montessori Method, the school is known for its success in teaching children to read and write through the phonetic approach called “Words in Color”. Heavily influenced by Dr. Caleb Gattegno’s work in reading and mathematics education, the school strives to subordinate teaching to learning through an individualized approach to reading and mathematics. Specially-prepared, colored reading charts enhance the children’s observations about how letters work to form words as well as which letters are needed to write certain spelling words. Consequently, children become fluent readers and competent spellers as well as prolific writers. For mathematics, in addition to the familiar Montessori math materials, our school utilizes colored math rods, which give the children the chance to see the algebraic relationships between numbers. Children become gymnastic with numbers. Completing the Montessori curriculum are studies in music, drama, band, jazz band, chorus, Spanish immersion, foreign languages, art, art history, computer education, and physical education.

## LAKE ERIE COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

**HOW HAS LECOM BECOME A LEADER IN MEDICAL EDUCATION?** The Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM), the nation's largest medical school, is educating the next generation of osteopathic physicians, pharmacists and dentists. Nearly 1,500 students attend the College's campus in Bradenton, Fla. LECOM has established itself as a national leader in medical education through a commitment to innovative, student-centered programs. For example, the College of Medicine's Problem-Based Learning (PBL) pathway promotes critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills through a team approach. The School of Dental Medicine also offers a PBL, patient-centered learning approach focused on extensive classroom learning and clinical training. Second-year students are now treating patients in group practice offices on the Bradenton campus. The School of Pharmacy offers a four-year Doctor of Pharmacy degree as well as an online option for students who require greater flexibility. In addition, LECOM recently introduced an online Master's program in Health Services Administration (MHSA) for students who want to develop the expertise required to plan, direct and coordinate medical and health services. The MHSA will complement LECOM's current Master's programs in Medical Education and Biomedical Sciences. A focus on affordability as well as quality and innovation allows students to graduate with considerably less debt than their peers. Among private medical schools, LECOM offers the second-lowest tuition nationally. LECOM also has established itself as a leader in medical education through its commitment to service and to providing care where it is needed most. The College is investing nearly \$6.5 million in a community-based dental office in the Florida Panhandle city of DeFuniak Springs. This dental practice will allow fourth-year students to gain valuable, hands-on experience while also providing affordable dental care for residents. At a time when health care is fundamentally changing, the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine continues to build healthier communities, one graduate and one patient at a time.

### Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine

5000 Lakewood Ranch Blvd. Bradenton, FL 34211

Phone: 941-756-0690 • [www.lecom.edu](http://www.lecom.edu)



“LECOM has established itself as a national leader in medical education through a commitment to student-centered programs.”

### LECOM School of Dental Medicine

4800 Lakewood Ranch Blvd. Bradenton, FL 34211

Phone: 941-405-1500 • [www.lecom.edu](http://www.lecom.edu)

The Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine is preparing the next generation of health care professionals. Established in 1992 in Erie, Pa., LECOM has grown to become the largest medical school in the country. LECOM opened a branch campus in Bradenton, Fla. in 2004, which has grown to include the College of Osteopathic Medicine, School of Pharmacy and School of Dental Medicine. Medical and pharmacy students receive clinical education while working alongside physicians and pharmacists in Florida's Gulf Coast communities. The School of Dental Medicine recently opened its dental group practice in Bradenton, where students – with the supervision of faculty members–offer primary care dentistry services to the public. LECOM medical school graduates have the opportunity to continue their post-graduate training locally at Manatee Memorial Hospital and Manatee Glens residency programs. A commitment to service is one of the hallmarks of LECOM's mission. Students at LECOM's Bradenton, Erie and Greensburg, Pa., campuses volunteered over 30,000 hours of service last academic year. Students support many non-profit organizations in their communities including: the YMCA, American Red Cross, Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranch, American Cancer Society, Autism Speaks, Bridging the Gaps, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and Turning Points. The College has been selected to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for eight consecutive years. This is the highest federal recognition a college or university can receive for its commitment to volunteering, service-learning and civic engagement.

# THE NEWGATE SCHOOL

TIM SELDIN, HEAD OF SCHOOL



## The NewGate School

5237 Ashton Road, Sarasota, FL 34233

Phone: 941.922.4949 • [www.newgate.edu](http://www.newgate.edu)

### HOW DOES YOUR EDUCATION MODEL PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE?

One of the things that I love most about NewGate is that it's both an independent and international school; we are able to offer things that aren't available at public schools. Also, independent schools are distinctly different from one another; they are not typically bound by the state exams; they have freedom to prepare children for university and for life from the school's own perspective instead of from the dictate of state legislature; and, they survive by their ability to attract families who are looking for something different. NewGate is truly an international school in several ways: Firstly, it is very appealing to families who have moved here from around the world and are looking for an education that can transfer with them if they choose to move to another country. International schools, by definition, teach an international curriculum; Montessori curriculum is focused on creating internationally educated global citizens. NewGate was recently recognized as an International Baccalaureate World School. As such, our high school graduates will have the opportunity to sit for the IB diploma examinations, and upon passing the exams, they will be able to take their high school diploma almost anywhere in the world. This provides students with high recognition in American university admissions, because IB graduates are exceptionally well prepared for a university. NewGate's college admission and completion rate has been virtually 100% since our first graduation class in 2004, but we take pride in our message that "education should be a journey, not a race." We encourage and cultivate a spirit of interest, curiosity, imagination and a passion for doing things well and mastering skills from the earliest ages. We stress the dignity and the importance of early childhood education—that is the foundation upon which everything is built. Our style and approach to education is very child-centered and very fostering of independence and a sense of empowerment for students to find their own voice and become leaders.

"Montessori schools are acclaimed around the world for producing incredibly mature, responsible and fascinating young people—and we prepare them to succeed at the world's best universities."

The NewGate School is a coeducational, non-sectarian, college preparatory international Montessori school located in Sarasota, Florida. It is authorized as an International Baccalaureate World School, offering the IB Diploma Program. NewGate is the Lab School of The Montessori Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of Montessori education in the United States and abroad. Head of School Tim Seldin is also president of The Montessori Foundation. Under his leadership the school develops curriculum and best practices for Montessori schools around the world. The goal of The NewGate School is to nurture intelligence, curiosity and imagination while supporting and developing each students' unique talents. Classrooms are carefully prepared environments for learning and discovery, set up to facilitate student discussion and stimulate collaborative learning. There are no rows of desks facing a large blackboard, but rather warm inviting spaces filled with plants, animals, art, music and books. Much of the curriculum takes place outdoors as students also learn to be stewards of their environment. The NewGate School teaches universal values and instills a global perspective, responsible citizenship, and encourages an entrepreneurial spirit. The aim is to graduate young people who are balanced between their knowledge and character so they become life-long learners, critical thinkers and active leaders in their local community, their country the world. In 2015, The NewGate School will offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program to all of its students. This international program is recognized university work. New Gate's graduates go on to succeed in university and in life.

## SAINT STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

DR. JANET PULLEN, HEAD OF SCHOOL

### HOW DOES YOUR CURRICULUM PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE?

Academic excellence is central to the culture at Saint Stephen's. Our teachers are passionate about the subjects they teach and genuinely care about the success of each student. With the freedom that comes from being an independent school, each teacher develops and presents a curriculum that challenges and reflects the individual attributes of their students. As a result, our students are exposed to a variety of real world and enrichment opportunities that encourage them to go beyond the classroom and into that world that will soon be their work environment. This past year we adopted an iPad initiative, which required every student, sixth through twelfth grade, to bring an iPad to school. This enhanced the curriculum by providing students with access to a world of information at their fingertips. Preparing students for the future using 21st century tools gets them engaged in the most innovative advancements in education, which encourages critical thinking and improves their analytical skills. Our economics instructor brings local entrepreneurs and experienced financial advisors into the classroom to provide students with real life information and scenarios as part of the curriculum. Saint Stephen's students have the benefit of doing environmental science field work on the Manatee River and beyond with regular access to Freedom Boat Club's vessels and guides enhancing their classroom and lab experiences. Our language curriculum provides pre-kindergarten students with the opportunity to learn both the Mandarin and Spanish language. From kindergarten through twelfth grade, students study language five days a week; they're not just exposed to the foreign language, but they are writing, reading and speaking the language to the point of fluency. This prepares students to actively engage in the globally driven society of their future. Finally, we have integrated across the disciplines our STEaM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) program, which challenges our students to employ innovative problem solving and interconnected, critical thinking across those five areas. With the inclusion of the arts, we feel that a sense of creativity enhances the other areas—cross-curricular coordination is of utmost importance for those disciplines to work together. The many special features of our curriculum provide our students with a well-rounded, practical education that thoroughly prepares them for the future.

### Saint Stephen's Episcopal School

315 41st Street West, Bradenton, FL 34209

Phone: 941.746.2121 • [www.saintstephens.org](http://www.saintstephens.org)



Saint Stephen's Episcopal School is an independent college preparatory school located in Bradenton serving students from Bradenton, Sarasota, Lakewood Ranch, Longboat Key, Anna Maria Island and Apollo Beach. Saint Stephen's delivers academic excellence across its many grade levels and programs, and features four all-school initiatives. The fall of 2013 saw the introduction of the iPad initiative, which gives all students direct instruction using this technology in a meaningful and integrated manner. Our Global Education initiative connects Saint Stephen's with schools from around the world on a regular basis, in essence bringing the world to our students. Marine Science is an initiative allowing students to study the ocean environment from a variety of different perspectives and across disciplines from our backyard, campus dock and out on kayaks and boats. This initiative promotes active learning through exploration of the McLewis Bayou, Manatee River, and beyond. Finally, our Emotional Intelligence initiative influences teaching and learning with the notion that students need to grow both socially and emotionally, in addition to growing academically and athletically. Volunteerism is an important part of the curriculum at Saint Stephen's. Along with the Falcon Friend program, middle school classes spend one service day a month at various sites in Manatee County. They read to young children at public elementary schools, help with planting and weeding at Palma Sola Botanical Garden and Geraldson Community Farm, spend time with residents at elderly day care centers and fill packets for Hope Seeds that get sent to third-world countries. High school students are required to complete 100 hours of service.

## SARASOTA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

JEFFREY A. SHANK, SUPERINTENDENT



### HOW DO YOU CUSTOMIZE YOUR ACADEMIC PROGRAM SO EACH STUDENT REACHES THEIR FULL POTENTIAL?

With education you can't use a one size fits all approach. We believe it's important to look at each student individually, determine what ignites their passion for learning and make the best academic plan for them to thrive. We believe education should be innovative, rigorous, and collaborative. As a private school we value the ability to be flexible in meeting our students' needs and parents' desires by offering advanced academics, college credits, learning support, and a part-time program for homeschooled students. We are also dedicated to nurturing the wholeness of the students entrusted to our care and offer many enrichment classes in addition to core subjects. For example, elementary students have physical education three times a week, music twice a week, Spanish, library and iPad lab weekly. Middle and high school students have the opportunity to play competitive sports, participate in drama, choir, band, and strings, as well as art and technology courses. And all grade levels have access to our world-ranked Odyssey of the Mind program. However, academic, art and athletic excellence isn't our only focus. Children spend the majority of their waking hours involved in school and school-related activities each week. Therefore, we are grateful as a Christian school to be able to share and instill the Word of God as students navigate the most influential years of their lives. In addition to our Bible classes and chapels, our faculty incorporates Biblical teachings into all aspects of learning. The freedom to dig deep into scripture and build a firm spiritual foundation is immeasurable. So many of our parents tell us that "The best part about Sarasota Christian is that you don't have to sacrifice academic excellence. You can have the whole package; top-notch academics, athletics, arts, a safe and caring community, and Biblical teaching woven into daily life."

"Sarasota Christian School has distinguished itself as a premier private Christian school and our award winning co-curricular programs and athletics provide options for students to excel in many areas. We value our designed flexibility because it allows us to establish the best academic plan for each student."

### Sarasota Christian School

5415 Bahia Vista Street, Sarasota, FL 34232

Phone: 941.371.6481 • [www.sarasotachristian.org](http://www.sarasotachristian.org)

Sarasota Christian School educates students Pre-K through 12th grade, and is dedicated to providing a nurturing environment in which students can grow in mind, body and spirit. Our mission is to honor God by developing academic abilities and broadening educational experiences while deepening Christian faith through partnership with the home, the church, and the community. Committed Christian faculty teach academically challenging, Biblically-infused curriculum while giving individualized attention to each student in small sized classes. Our curriculum is mapped Pre-K through 12th grade ensuring concepts are connected between each grade level. Students also have course offerings in Bible, foreign language, technology, fine arts and physical education. Sarasota Christian offers an Accelerated College Education (ACE) program which provides higher-level academic opportunities including honors courses, advanced placement courses, and on-site college dual enrollment courses. This popular program gives opportunity for students to earn college credit hours while remaining in a Christian environment. Sarasota Christian students' SAT and ACT scores are higher than state and national composite scores. But Sarasota Christian is about more than just academic excellence; the school not only prepares students for college and careers, it teaches faith-based values and principles to help students build a Christ-centered foundation for life. We inspire students to learn about other cultures through community service, mission trips and our International School Partnership Program. Service is an integral part of a Sarasota Christian education; our high school students served over 7600 volunteer hours last year alone. Established in 1958 and located on a beautiful 25-acre campus, Sarasota Christian is fully accredited by four independent agencies.

# TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM SCHOOLS

WENDY KATZ, HEAD OF SCHOOL

## HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO STRIVE FOR SUCCESS?

Temple Beth Sholom Schools embrace children of all faiths and provide children with a solid (rich) foundation for learning and their emotional well-being. The school environment is warm, inviting, and family centered where Jewish values are promoted and incorporated within the curriculum and learning methods. The school's educational philosophy emphasizes rigorous academics using inquiry and project-based learning. These instructional approaches strongly endorse the 21st century skills that are necessary for children to be successful beyond their school years at TBSS in college and the workplace. The focus of teaching is student-centered, which encourages students to take greater responsibility for their own learning. Students are taught how to do research, how to work together cooperatively and how to solve problems while teachers provide guidance, expertise and assistance. Our youngest learners gain social and motor skills as well as academic learning through play, stories, songs, and projects as well. Project-based learning, along with an enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff, help encourage students to think on their feet, respond with confidence, take initiative and figure out their own solutions instead of waiting on answers to appear. Project-based learning is very different than a traditional education—it helps students connect learning to the real world, promotes teamwork and collaboration, and is much more customized to the individual learner.

“TBSS Schools: One of Sarasota’s Best Kept Secrets and where learning is irresistible!”

### Temple Beth Sholom Schools

1050 S. Tuttle Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34237

Justin Lee Wiesner Preschool • Phone: 941-955-8121

Goldie Feldman Academy • Phone: 941-552-2770

[www.tbsschools.org](http://www.tbsschools.org)



Temple Beth Sholom Schools (TBSS), an independent, private, all faiths day school affiliated with Temple Beth Sholom, serves the Pre-School and K-8 population in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. With a mission to impact the world through academic excellence, global citizenship and compassionate action, students are taught through Project-Based Learning (PBL) with a focus on teaching for understanding. TBSS encompasses the Justin Lee Wiesner Preschool program, established in 1974, which consists of classes for Baby Play and education for children up through pre-K. Additionally, The Goldie Feldman Academy (GFA), an expansion of the Justin Lee Wiesner Preschool, was established in 1992 and serves students from kindergarten through 8th grade. The TBSS curriculum and values center on The Kavod Code, which means honor and respect in Hebrew, and is based on principles that provide a framework for living and working together in an atmosphere of honesty, integrity, mutual trust and respect. While the school is affiliated with Temple Beth Sholom, TBSS hires staff and accepts students of every religious and cultural background. TBS Schools is accredited by Florida Kindergarten Council along with the Florida Council of Independent Schools. For more information about TBS Schools, go to [www.tbsschools.org](http://www.tbsschools.org)

## UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA SARASOTA-MANATEE



**WHAT SIGNIFICANT CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE AT USF SARASOTA-MANATEE THIS YEAR THAT AFFECT OUR LOCAL ECONOMY?**

This year, USFSM welcomed 100 freshmen to a new four-year educational opportunity. We built state-of-the-art science labs at Mote Marine Laboratory for our future doctors, pharmacists, scientists and medical researchers, and launched a new biology degree. In January, the College of Hospitality & Technology Leadership debuted its Culinary Innovation Lab in Lakewood Ranch, a dynamic new hub for hands-on teaching, hotel and restaurant management training, culinary research and special events located in the heart of Main St. USFSM continues to break new ground in the preparation of students for careers in Education, Business, Arts and Sciences and

Hospitality and Technology Leadership. The College of Education's future teachers and educational leaders work with visual and performing arts organizations such as the Sarasota Opera, Asolo Rep and The Ringling to revolutionize elementary school classroom learning, integrating the arts into elementary school classrooms in ways that excite and motivate children.

**USF Sarasota-Manatee**

8350 N Tamiami Trail Sarasota, FL 34243

5920 Pan American Blvd. North Port, FL 34287

Phone: 941.359.4200 • [www.usfsm.edu](http://www.usfsm.edu)

USF Sarasota-Manatee is a regional institution of the University of South Florida system, offering the prestige of a nationally ranked research university with the convenience of a hometown location, including classes in North Port and Manatee County. USFSM is ideal for those interested in pursuing a baccalaureate or master's degree, professional certification, or continuing education credit in a small, personal setting with distinguished faculty and a dynamic curriculum of over 40 academic programs. Website: [www.usfsm.edu](http://www.usfsm.edu)