

Welcome Letter 2017-18

Dear Cicero Prep Families of 2017-2018,

Welcome (back) to Cicero Prep!

We are excited to begin this new year with the opportunity it brings to cultivate the minds and hearts of students in pursuit of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, for this is what we at Cicero Prep are all about.

Building on last year's theme of respect, our theme this year is *integrity*. We have defined integrity this way:

To have integrity is to possess strong moral principles and strong moral character. A person of integrity is someone who is whole, not divided, as in, say, someone who claims to be one thing but is in reality something different. A person of integrity does the right thing, even if that is not the easy thing. A person of integrity does the right thing, and not the easy thing, even when no one is watching.

Cultivating the minds of students in Truth involves integrity in academic and intellectual pursuits. Someone who has intellectual/academic integrity is someone who values the Truth more than being “right” or “winning” an argument. Someone who values intellectual/academic integrity takes pride in developing his or her own reasoning and academic skills and is not someone who submits someone else's work as though it were his or her own. A person of intellectual/academic integrity is someone who is humble in the face of better evidence or arguments and submits to the truth, even if that means changing one's mind or admitting that one was incorrect. A person of intellectual/academic integrity is someone who senses the mystery and basks in the wonder with respect to their own self and with respect to each of the subjects of human inquiry. That is real growth, and that is what we are seeking at Cicero Prep.

Cultivating the minds and hearts of students in Goodness involves helping students to develop good habits, habits such as respecting and caring for others—often in small ways, such as by holding the door for the person following or making eye contact while shaking someone's hand--and it also means helping students to develop habits of respect and caring for others in larger ways, such as by growing in the recognition of the value of human persons and seeking their good by producing a more philosophical and humane society. Being a person of integrity involves speaking the truth, keeping one's word, caring about others' thoughts and points of view, being charitable in the face of others' faults and weaknesses, and thinking the best of others, rather than assuming the worst. Thus, in both large and small ways we seek to cultivate a love of the Good in the minds and hearts of students, and that is what we are seeking at Cicero Prep.

Cultivating the minds and hearts of students in Beauty involves educating the tastes and elevating the affections of young people. Being surrounded by beauty engenders a recognition of and dissatisfaction with ugliness when it is encountered. Exposure to the most magnificent music and art that has been produced in Western civilization enriches students by helping them to appreciate excellence in composition, form, and execution, and it inspires them to reach for that excellence and perhaps surpass it. The ability to appraise artistic productions with honesty and integrity enriches the horizon of a young person, and that is real growth, and that is what we are seeking at Cicero Prep.

Hence, we look forward to another wonderful year together as we seek to deepen the integrity of students through the cultivation of their minds and hearts in the pursuit of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. Thank you for entrusting your students to us; we strive unceasingly to provide them with a world-class education in a safe and joyful community of learners. Your partnership with us makes this possible. Thank you.

Warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Discher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Mark Discher

Headmaster, Cicero Preparatory Academy