

MAIN EDITORIAL

LEED-ing to ensure a better tomorrow

Following the tornado's destruction of Hicks Gym, the school has set about on a lengthy process to build a new facility. As part of this process, environmental considerations have been discussed; we hope the school creates an efficient and sustainable building on campus, symbolizing its commitment to future generations.



THE VOID
After a devastating tornado struck campus nearly three years ago, a large crater remains where Hicks Gym once stood. This space will soon be filled by a new athletic center.

PHOTO Charlie Estess

It's time we stay true to our Statement of Environmental Policy. As it states, "The School assigns significant priority to integrating environmental awareness, understanding, and stewardship into its academic mission, campus improvements and operations."

LEED certification — specifically Gold or Platinum — should, without a doubt, be one such priority. LEED provides an outline — a point system — for efficient and sustainable buildings, and certification can be

LEED CERTIFICATION

points required for each level of LEED certification

40 Certified



50 Silver



60 Gold



80 Platinum



gained by adhering to certain requirements that address carbon energy, water, waste, transportation, materials, health and indoor environmental quality. It's a globally recognized symbol of environmental leadership.

It's time we be that leader.

Centennial Hall and Hoffman Center are only two of three buildings on campus that are LEED silver — which is understandable because the majority of buildings on campus are older — built during a time when greater sustainable practices in construction were available, but certainly not a priority if they meant expanding the budget and writing a larger paycheck up front.

As our planet becomes more overpopulated and pollution-ridden, sustainable practices must be a priority for us at 10600 Preston Road.

In the past 10 years, private and public schools in the greater Dallas area and across the country have already received Gold certification for their newly constructed buildings, symbolizing their commitment to the greater good. We were taken aback when we found out that our renowned, state-of-the-art Winn Science Center did, in fact, *not* attain Gold LEED certification.

Quoting our Statement of Environmental Policy once more, "Respecting the needs of future generations, St. Mark's School of Texas will provide leadership in environmental sustainability and responsibility."

It's time we quit thinking in the short term environmentally and begin thinking about future generations of Marksmen.

Construction of the new gym and athletic center is the perfect place to start.

Let's strive for LEED Gold.

Because LEED does much more than lowering carbon footprints. By utilizing LED lighting and energy efficient heating and cooling systems, we'll save significantly in energy and maintenance costs. Furthermore, per the Department of Energy, LEED buildings report using 25 percent less energy and 11 percent less water than non-LEED buildings.

Gold certification will bring all these benefits and more.

While Gold certification will undoubtedly necessitate greater costs up front, it's evident the money will come back over time.

So we reiterate: Think long-term.

Because — barring another tornado — the gym will stand for decades. And what does it say about the school community if we don't take this step to be environmental leaders?

It's time we institute sustainable practices into our new buildings to ensure a sustainable and eco-friendly future.

Let's LEED.

COVER EDITORIAL

Attention to the small things is necessary for continued well-being of the community

As the administration seeks to emphasize the small things, students have had mixed reactions. The connection between the small things — a tucked-in shirt, a clean shaven face, a belt — and building character is a difficult one. To many young people, the small things are insignificant, and, in many ways, it's only natural to have that opinion.

However, we agree with the administration's belief that paying attention to the small things can eventually pay dividends.

Much like a tennis player must practice a forehand on end, with careful attention to the minute details of footwork, stance and racquet speed, the small things add up. After all, a Grand Slam winner is not built in a day. Dedication to the small things, daily, might appear to be a nuisance. But in months and years, it can be transformative.

And a Grand Slam winner is not built in a day. Overlooking the small things is contagious, especially to younger Marksmen who constantly look up to the older guys. It takes community-wide buy-in to raise expectations and promote healthy habits. During COVID-19,

community ties weakened, and while they're strong as ever now, we have become sloppy with the small things, and also the big things. Fueled by an increased amount of online assessments, where cheating may have been easier, academic dishonesty has risen since the pandemic. It's certainly not an issue exclusive to the school, but our commitment to our values of courage and honor make it incomparably unacceptable. At an environment like 10600 Preston Road, honest and open class work and testing is paramount. It allows us to do what we love, to engage with each other intellectually and passionately. Without academic honesty, that disintegrates.

While we understand that maintaining high standards is critically important, there needs to be a reasonable balance between integrity and convenience, one which the administration has mostly upheld in the first month of school, with a few missteps. For instance, lunch serves as a time of collaboration for students, whose packed schedules often compel them to work on projects while eating. The school day can be long and exhausting, and for many students, a supplemental snack or meal is almost a necessity.

As such, the stringent measures on box lunches and other food outside the cafeteria can be overbearing and reduce productivity.

Additionally, school work is usually done on computers. It's a sign of society's increased reliance on technology for utility, something that has been hastened by the pandemic. Many enjoy completing their work outside, surveying the quadrangle as they study. The crackdown on computers in non-designated spaces only makes it harder for students to complete their work. We appreciate the administration's efforts to improve habits and foster community-wide expectations, but we cannot simply go back to exactly how things were — because **everything has changed, including us.**

We hope that the student body will continue to increase their awareness of the small things. We hope that Upper School students will continue to set examples for younger Marksmen, setting the tone for the community at large. But above all, as the return to normalcy is nearly complete, we hope that the values of this institution and the integrity and character of its people will continue to shine bright.