City and Country’s program is designed to meet the developmental needs of each Group, and of individuals within each Group, assuring that each student learns in terms of his or her own self. Differentiated teaching is a priority at C&C, and curriculum is developed on an ongoing basis and in response to the needs of the children. Group Teachers, however, are not the only staff at C&C dedicated to meeting the needs of a wide variety of learners.

The Student Support Team (consisting of C&C’s Learning Specialists, School Psychologists, Divisional Directors, and Principal) works with each Group Teacher to assure that individual students maintain a forward-moving arc of skills and development across their years at C&C.

The Team, and the process that they follow, also assures that important information about an individual student’s learning is shared from year to year so that the upcoming teacher can benefit from approaches that have worked with students in the past. Group Teachers also work closely with the Team to determine the new mixing of Groups for the following year.

Our school has a commitment to close observation of children and careful analysis of their needs and strengths. The Student Support Team is the resource that helps determine when additional support is necessary, planning in detail to address needs and following up on those plans. The Student Support Team brings a developmental perspective that takes children’s individual growth into account when identifying issues. Given the collaborative process of the Student Support Team, recommendations for interventions are not made precipitously or by individual members of the team, but rather are made based on thorough observation and reflection by the team as a whole. The team has a history of productive collaboration and effective intervention.

In sum, the Student Support Team is the counseling body for the educational and psychological needs of the School. Their goal is to work with teachers and families to ensure the best learning conditions for each child. The Student Support Team monitors students’ academic progress and emotional development through the Team’s meetings, as well as classroom observations, direct work with Groups, and ongoing communications among Student Support team members, teachers, and other school staff.

Who are the Members of the Student Support Team?

Principal Kate Turley
Lower School Director Jane Clarke
Middle/Upper School Director Alex Ragone
Lower School Learning Specialist Nancy Vascellaro
Middle School Learning Specialist Colette Corry
Upper School Learning Specialist Michele Bloom
Lower School Psychologist Liz Tingley
Middle/Upper School Psychologist Eileen Fitzgerald
This edition of *Currents* outlines the key roles within the Student Support Team, as well as the processes that drive student support.

**PROCESS AND PROCEDURES**

The Student Support Team meets weekly by Division, joined by Group Teachers on a rotating basis. Prior to these meetings, team members observe students in the classroom. During meetings, student strengths and needs are discussed, strategies planned, and follow-up monitored by those participating.

In the monthly full Student Support meetings, which all members attend, topics of interest to the School as a whole are discussed, including the assessment and formulation of guidelines and practices.

In the Middle/Upper School, members of the Student Support Team also meet with Specials teachers, who can often shed new light on a child.

In addition to scheduled meetings, teachers may ask for assistance with an individual child or Group as needed. With a dedicated Learning Specialist at each school level, support is extremely focused.

**LEARNING SPECIALISTS**

The three full-time Learning Specialists work closely with students, teachers, psychologists, administrative staff, and families. The Learning Specialists regularly observe in classrooms. Their work with the teachers includes tailoring approaches to learning based on specific Groups, engaging in frequent discussions and meetings, and planning for accommodations that will provide students with an optimal learning experience. The Learning Specialists assist teachers to maximize the possibilities of C&C’s program—fully exploring the potential of multiple modalities (visual, hands-on, etc.) and differentiating a child’s learning experience—so that children with varied learning styles can thrive. Technology, such as Google Documents and Kindles with Immersion Reading technology, is used thoughtfully to ensure that students can progress. The Learning Specialists also maintain a collection of articles, materials, and books as teacher resources.

The Lower School Learning Specialist oversees the reading program in the VIs and VIIs, when Language Arts is taught in small, skills-based groups. Small groups are lead by Group and Assistant Teachers, as well as by both Lower and Middle School Learning Specialists and the Reading Consultant.

As a Lower School Reading Teacher, the Middle School Learning Specialist knows many students from when they were VIs and VIIs, and is able to help families, students, and teachers as students transition into the Middle School. In addition, the Middle School Learning Specialist spends ample time in classrooms to support teachers and students, and is a Library Teacher and Book Group Teacher.

The Upper School Learning Specialist continues classroom work, is a Library Teacher, and collaborates with the Academic Performance Lab (APL) Teacher with an eye to teaching Upper School students executive functioning skills (planning and prioritizing, time management, study skills, and note-taking). Building these skills teaches students to advocate for their own needs, and the Upper School Learning Specialist is available throughout the day to assist them with any questions they may have about their learning.

**STUDENT SUPPORT OVER TIME**

**Admissions**

The Learning Specialists screen children as part of the admissions process. The Student Support Team is involved with admissions decisions, including Group placement.

**During the School Year**

Whether in one-on-one meetings or as part of greater observation and collaboration with teachers, the Student Support Team compiles information on every student each year.
The Learning Specialists meet with parents by appointment and are instrumental in making recommendations for remediation or evaluations. Along with the Group Teachers, the Learning Specialists frequently work with parents to develop plans for helping their children at home. To support families’ appeals for external services, Learning Specialists attend hearings and reviews held by the Committee for Special Education (CSE); the Lower School Psychologist coordinates the Committee for Preschool Special Education (CPSE) hearings. Learning Specialists offer guidance when a family chooses to provide services privately.

**SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

Each School Psychologist is at C&C three days a week. The School Psychologists observe the children at work in classrooms, and consult with teachers and staff who work with the children. They work with parents, teachers, and staff to support the emotional and psychological needs of children in the School and provide limited direct service to students. The Psychologists maintain a collection of articles, materials, and books for parents and teachers.

The School Psychologists frequently speak at general meetings for parents on developmental issues and parenting strategies. Each age group has a yearly Coffee & Conversation meeting focusing on age-level concerns. Both Psychologists also facilitate a biweekly “Banana Splits” group for children in the VIs through XIIIIs whose parents are separated or divorced. Another support group is available for children who have lost a parent.

The Middle/Upper School Psychologist works with Group Teachers in the VIIIs-XIIIIs to schedule and participate in regular Community Meetings—an important forum for students to speak about what is bothering them, find ways to solve conflicts, and live as a healthy Group. Topics are generally student-driven. Challenging issues are not made light of; rather, they are addressed directly through discussion.

Students in the Upper School can arrange to meet with the School Psychologist once or twice on their own initiative, while Middle School students can do so at their parents’ request. The School Psychologists are available to meet with the parents of all students in the School on an appointment basis. When appropriate, they provide parents with referrals to outside professionals.

**IDENTIFYING NEEDS**

Whenever possible, students’ academic and behavioral needs are addressed through the educational program, with the Group Teacher often implementing specific strategies to support a child.

Given the small size of our Groups and School, children can be closely followed at City and Country; daily opportunities exist for informal observation and discussion among staff. The structure of meetings and consultation enables the Student Support team to identify students’ learning needs, and generate strategies to address them.

In addition, the Lower School Learning Specialist administers an annual screening to all children in the VIs. She then shares the results with teachers and parents. This screening helps anticipate any needs that may have an impact once small-group reading instruction begins in the VIs. Initial reading assessments at the beginning of VIs and VIIIs assist Learning Specialists and teachers to create small reading groups. A Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) takes place at the end of the VIIIs’ school year to assess learning needs. The QRI also provides information to the Middle School Learning Specialist that is helpful in planning the transition into Middle School. As part of APL, Upper School students practice taking standardized tests, which can also provide insight on their academic progress.

**Transition to a New Year**

The Student Support Team assures a continuity in support from year to year at C&C.

**Transition Between Divisions**

There is a special focus on the shift inherent in moving from the Lower School into the Middle School (VIIIs to VIIIs), and from the Middle School into the Upper School (XIs into XIs) at C&C. The three Learning Specialists work closely to assure smooth transitions.

**Transition to High School**

The Team, well aware of a student’s history and performance at C&C, and along with the XIIIIs Group Teachers, assist the HS Placement Coordinator in guiding students and parents through the application process.
When is Tutoring Necessary?

As a general principle, City and Country School believes that recommendations for outside tutoring should be rare. However, when both a teacher and the Student Support Team believe that a student would benefit from additional support, outside tutoring may be recommended. The School will make this recommendation and work with the family to identify appropriate tutors. Frequent communication among parents, school, and outside support will be maintained.

In-school tutoring: In some instances, the school may endorse outside support during the school day for a child. This support is organized through a Learning Specialist.

After-school tutoring: City and Country has limited space available for after-school tutoring. Priority is given to supports recommended by the School.

and make plans for implementation. In addition, teachers and Learning Specialists communicate regularly with therapists and tutors.

In all cases, the Student Support Team works to ensure the most effective learning conditions for each Group and individual student from the IIs to the XIlls. The goal is for children to thrive at C&C.

When INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGES ARISE

When further information about children’s learning needs is required, referrals are made to outside professionals for evaluations. These may include psychoeducational evaluations, speech and language evaluations, occupational therapy assessments, or evaluations through the Department of Education. After parents receive the evaluation report, all involved—including the evaluator when possible—discuss the recommendations

Students Support Process

• C&C Grad in Today’s Work World
• The High School Process
• Literacy
• Rhythms
• Math
• Technology
• Play
• Homework
• Plays at C&C
• Jobs Program

C&C is devoted to a greener today. Working with a printer who uses wind power energy, organic, non-petroleum based inks and FSC certified papers are some of the ways we demonstrate this commitment.