



# Portrait of a 2024 Graduate

By Dr. Scott Bray, Director of Teaching, Learning, and Research

In 2024, The New Community School will celebrate its 50th year of empowering bright minds who think and learn differently. As we look toward that time, we have been working on a summary document that encapsulates the values, attributes, and characteristics we believe will best position a TNCS graduate for success. We are calling this a Portrait of a TNCS Graduate.

A new paradigm confronts the nation and America's students. During the 20th century, the economy of the United States transitioned from being primarily based on agriculture to industry and eventually, at the close of the century, to information. In his book, *The World is Flat*, Thomas Friedman calls the current era Globalization 3.0. Globalization 3.0 is characterized by the power of individuals living around the world to communicate, collaborate, and compete.

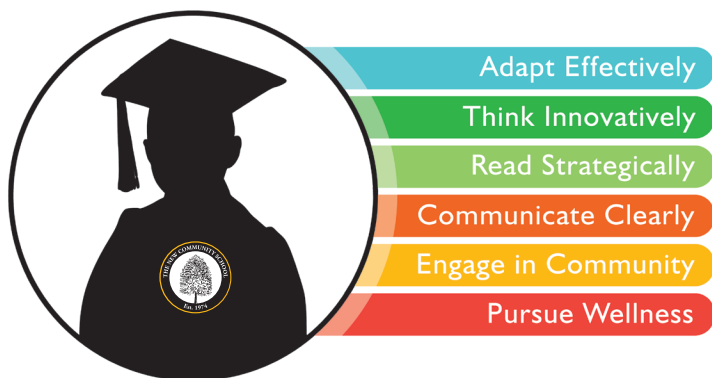
Recognizing the changing landscape, The New Community School engaged in a strategic planning process that spanned multiple years. The result was a robust strategic plan that provides a sense of direction for the school, informing both our day-to-day decision-making and our larger long-term initiatives.

This strategic plan, adopted in January 2019, seeks to address three essential questions, the first of which is "How does TNCS design an enhanced, comprehensive experience that prepares students for their future?" When answering the question of a comprehensive experience, we are looking at the best ways to build a program that meets our students' needs academically and personally, and builds a supportive, cohesive school culture.

One essential strategic driver aligned to the comprehensive experience was the development of a Portrait of a TNCS Graduate. This Portrait is meant to serve as a guide for both students and teachers in order to develop the skills necessary for success in a rapidly changing, increasingly diverse and interconnected world. Led by the Head of School and a team of teacher leaders, the faculty engaged in broad-ranging discussions around the development of a Portrait of a TNCS Graduate. During the summer of 2019, an initial

draft of the Portrait of a TNCS Graduate was created. The draft was shared with faculty for input prior to the start of the academic year and has become a guiding focus for their professional learning during the fall semester.

The Portrait of a TNCS Graduate has six main “attributes.” We believe that a successful TNCS graduate will be able to:



Each attribute is defined by corresponding resources that further articulate the outcomes. These include ‘I can’ statements, detailing characteristics that students can work towards, as well as links to underpinning research to help educators and parents learn more. Additionally, the work of our faculty has helped create a Learner Progression for each attribute. The progression reflects a scaffolded approach and our commitment to meet each learner where they are in their academic journey. Taken together, the Attribute Pages and Learner Progressions help to facilitate individual student reflection and growth.

The vision set out in the Portrait of a Graduate is consistent with TNCS’s core mission and values. Already there is evidence of the Portrait informing instructional practice and shaping our school culture. Moving forward, TNCS will continue to seek feedback from stakeholders while looking for additional opportunities to connect our curriculum and learning experiences in authentic ways - allowing students to question deeply and explore their passions. The world demands that students have a diverse skill set to succeed both inside and outside of the classroom.

Like our strategic plan, this Portrait is a living document that will grow and change with time as TNCS remains committed to making sure each of our students is prepared for future success. As we continue to invest time and resources in growing our comprehensive program and this Portrait, we welcome the feedback of our community. To explore an interactive version of the Portrait of a Graduate, please visit [tncs.org/academics/gradportrait](https://tncs.org/academics/gradportrait). You can also contact me at [sbray@tncs.org](mailto:sbray@tncs.org) or 804.266.2494, ext. 2263. •



The Junior Class enjoyed the annual college trip in the fall. They visited Longwood University, Lynchburg University, and Virginia Tech. The trip allows them to experience different types of schools, practice the touring process so they are more confident to do it on their own, and enjoy bonding time with their classmates and teachers.