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The Fulton School at St. Albans & Chesterfield Day School
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Two Local Independent Schools to Reunite *One shared mission for a more vibrant community in 2022-23*

CHESTERFIELD, MO October 7, 2021 -- The Fulton School at St. Albans (TFSSA) and Chesterfield Day School (CDS) are excited to announce the two schools will reunite as one on July 1, 2022.

After thorough discussion and an in-depth review, the governing boards of TFSSA and CDS voted unanimously to merge the two schools to continue their mutual mission of providing a quality Montessori education for students in a challenging and supportive environment. The merger, which will be effective July 1, 2022, has been under discussion for several months.

"The community of St. Albans has been our school's home for many years," said Pam Cavness, current President of the Board at TFSSA. "Our families have cherished the beauty and support of this entire village. But, the reality is that the majority of our students have, for more than 25 years, resided outside of the St. Albans community, with most living in St. Louis and St. Charles counties. Relocating and reuniting position our head of school, our teachers, and our staff to deliver our mission to more students and families, which is the ultimate role of any independent school board."

TFSSA was originally a second campus for CDS. The demand for private independent school education was significant when the second campus opened in 1994. In 2006, the TFSSA campus separated from CDS, allowing both schools to operate independently. Because The Fulton School at St. Albans was born out of Chesterfield Day School, their missions are innately aligned -- though the words and phrases may be slightly different. Leveraging a

shared history, a fully aligned mission, and a strategic location creates opportunity for a synergistic reunion and brings a unique 7th-12th grade option within convenient geographic proximity to a much larger student community. Both schools believe this reunion advances the passion and commitment each school has to innovative Montessori education for children 18 months old through 12th grade and benefits the students, families, faculty, staff and the surrounding St. Louis area community.

Peggy Fiala has been the Head of School at CDS since 2017, while Kara Fulton Douglass has been the Head of School at TFSSA since 2008. Upon this merger, Douglass will be named head of the merged schools; Fiala will become the Assistant Head responsible for the Lower School (Toddler through 6th grade) as well as the Learning Center Director.

“In any school merger, mission alignment is crucial,” said CDS Board President, Lisa Holekamp. “Since these two schools were once one, we have a rare opportunity and a unique advantage. While they have been independent of each other and have evolved in their own ways over the last fourteen years, they have both remained true to the tenets of the mission that guided the school from its early days. Those shared values will continue to inform the extraordinary work of teachers and learners in the newly reunited school.”

The two schools will spend the 2021-22 school year working on the operational implications of the merger. CDS and TFSSA will continue to operate as independent schools through June 30, 2022, after which time they will be fully merged and referred to as The Fulton School (TFS). The TFSSA community of students, faculty and staff from St. Albans will move to the CDS campus at 1100 White Road in Chesterfield next June.

ABOUT THE SCHOOLS' HISTORY AND HEADS

The History of Chesterfield Day School (CDS) -- In 1962, the first Montessori preschool in the St. Louis area opened -- St. Louis Montessori Academy -- headed by Elna Amant. The school established roots off of White Road in Chesterfield in 1974; by that time they were serving children through 6th grade. In 1984, the school was renamed Chesterfield Day School and over the course of the next 10 years, they would acquire adjacent land and expand their current building to allow for their broadening programs and subsequent

increased enrollment. Dr. Barb Fulton became head of CDS in 1976 and remained so until her passing in 2005. Peggy Fiala, current head of CDS, was named so in 2017.

Peggy Fiala has served as the Head of CDS for the last 4 years. She served for 32 years as a teacher, middle school principal and counselor at John Burroughs School. She was the counselor at the Canterbury School in Fort Myers, Florida in addition to several years in private practice. Fiala is a licensed professional counselor, with a Bachelor's in Education from University of Missouri-Columbia and a Master's Degree in Education from University of Missouri-St. Louis.

The History of The Fulton School (TFSSA) -- In the early 1990s, long-time CDS Head of School Dr. Barbara Fulton was asked by the developers of St. Albans to establish a second campus of Chesterfield Day School in their community in Franklin County.

Chesterfield Day School-St. Albans (CDS-SA) began with just a few preschool and elementary classes in one of the historic homes in the Village of St. Albans in 1994. Over the next 10 years, the school expanded to more buildings in the community as they accommodated more grade levels. In 1999, they broke ground and completed a new (and current) building at 123 Schoolhouse Road. By 2004, the school had expanded its programming and had its first senior graduating class. In 2005, Dr. Barb -- who was head of both campuses -- passed away after a long battle with cancer. In 2008, CDS-SA spun off from CDS and was renamed The Fulton School at St. Albans (TFSSA). In that same year, Dr. Barb's daughter, CDS Class of '86 alum, Kara Fulton Douglass, was named Head of School.

Kara Fulton Douglass has served as the Head of TFSSA for the last 13 years. She has also been a Montessori teacher, counselor and principal at various schools, including The Bullis School in Maryland and Academie Montessori in Belgium. She received her Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and German Studies from Rice University, as well as her Master's in Counseling from Covenant Theological Seminary. Douglass has served on the board for the Independent Schools of St. Louis (ISSL) and currently serves on the Independent Schools Association of the Central States' (ISACS) Accreditation Review Committee. She is an instructor of child development with the Hope Montessori Educational Institute.