



Address 8012 Oak St., New Orleans, LA 70118-2708
Phone (504) 861-3743 Fax (504) 861-3973
Website www.standrewsepischool.org
Email office@standrewsepischool.org

January 21, 2015

Dear St. Andrew's Families,

We have exciting news to announce.

In 2007, the St. Andrew's Cottage, then known as the Early Learning Center, was launched by St. Andrew's Episcopal Church as a response to the shortage of quality daycare programming for young children in post-Katrina New Orleans. Since that time, the Cottage has grown in size and in the breadth of its programming, now offering high-quality Early Childhood education to approximately twenty-six students ages 18 months to four years.

Demand for high-quality Early Childhood education has never been higher in the city of New Orleans, part of the story of our city's recovery and rebirth over the past decade. As evidence of this, the Cottage presently boasts a waiting list of nearly forty families eager to join the St. Andrew's community and benefit from the intimate and nurturing education we provide.

We are pleased to announce that, effective at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year, the St. Andrew's Cottage will formally become part of St. Andrew's Episcopal School, which is a ministry of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and will continue as such. Since 1957, St. Andrew's Episcopal School has been committed to the education and development of our city's youngest learners. We are delighted that our School's mission will soon extend to children ages 18 months through Grade 8.

As part of this new configuration, all Cottage children who reach age 3 by this August will move into a newly created classroom in de la Vega Hall. For this June and July, the School is planning significant improvements to de la Vega Hall, including (funding-permitting) new flooring, lighting, bathrooms, and centralized air conditioning and heating. The newly-renovated de la Vega Hall will offer a significantly improved teaching and learning environment for our 3-year-old students, our Pre-Kindergarten students, and our Kindergarten students.

With the Cottage 3-year-olds moving from Kimball Hall to de la Vega Hall, St. Andrew's will be able to turn to its waiting list and enroll up to an additional 14 students ages 18 months-36 months. Thus, the new Cottage will enroll approximately 28 students ages 18 months-36 months in Kimball Hall and approximately 14 students ages 3-4 in de la Vega Hall.



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We are delighted to increase the educational ministry of St. Andrew's in this fashion, all while meeting a demonstrated need in the city of New Orleans. While we hope that many, perhaps most, of the 3-year-olds in de la Vega Hall will enroll in the School's Pre-Kindergarten program when they reach age 4, those children will apply to the School for admission, just as they do now.

Kathy Smith, who has served with distinction as the Founding Director of the Cottage, will continue her work at St. Andrew's, teaching in the new 3-year-old classroom in de la Vega Hall. Please join us in thanking Kathy and supporting her in this wonderful transition as she returns to the classroom.

Effective immediately, the School will begin a search for a new Director of Early Childhood Programming at St. Andrew's. This individual will help oversee the transition of the Cottage Program into the School and will also have programmatic oversight of a new academic division of St. Andrew's—ages 18 months through Kindergarten. The Director will help ensure curricular consistency and excellence across our new Early Childhood Division, preparing our youngest students for a smooth transition into Grade 1 of our Lower School.

Also in the summer of 2015, the School will undertake some cosmetic and minor functional improvements to the first floor of Kimball Hall, home to the youngest Cottage students. A more expansive renovation to Kimball Hall is projected for the summer of 2016. Over the next year, the School will also investigate the feasibility of further expanding its Early Childhood Programming to include care for children ages 12 months or younger, possibly as early as summer 2016.

We recognize that these are significant changes affecting many members of the St. Andrew's community. We will endeavor to keep everyone informed of news and progress in the weeks and months to come. In the meantime, please know that the St. Andrew's Vestry, School Board, and Cottage Board stand united behind these changes, knowing they are beneficial for the children and families we serve.

Thank you for your support, and please do not hesitate to contact any of us with questions.

Yours,

Ruth Bilbe, Board Chair, St. Andrew's Cottage
Steven Chabaud, Senior Warden, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
Mason Lecky, Head of School, St. Andrew's Episcopal School
Jane Miller, Board Chair, St. Andrew's Episcopal School
Rev'd James Morrison, Priest in Charge, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
Kathy Smith, Director, St. Andrew's Cottage