

2026 State of the School Address

Scott Knaffla, President

Dear Japhet families, students, faculty, staff, and friends,

As we begin another school year, I would like to welcome back our returning families and students, and extend an especially warm welcome to those joining the Japhet community for the first time. I also would like to welcome back our incredible faculty and staff, along with the new faces joining our team this year.

There is a lot about the world today that can feel uncertain. Our children are growing up in a time of rapid change. Technology is transforming how we live, learn, and work. The world can feel increasingly divided, and young people are being asked to process more information, more opinions, and more noise than ever before.

And I believe that makes a Japhet education more important than ever.

Because while we cannot always predict the world our children will inherit, we can certainly help prepare them for it.

We can teach them to think critically and independently. To be curious. To listen before judging. To disagree respectfully. To persevere when something is difficult. To recognize the dignity and worth of others. And, most importantly, to understand that **who they become matters every bit as much as what they achieve.**

That is what makes Japhet special.

Academic excellence will always be an important part of our mission, but a Japhet education has never been measured by academics alone. Character is not an additional subject here. Through our 18 Character Qualities, character is woven into how our students learn, how they treat one another, how our teachers lead their classrooms, and how we define success.

In an uncertain world, knowledge gives our children options. Character gives them direction.

As we continue putting our strategic plan into action, that mission remains at the center of where Japhet is headed. We are building on more than five decades of experience while continuing to think carefully about what our students will need for the future.

As Board President—and as a Japhet alumnus myself—I remain incredibly grateful for the teachers and staff who bring that mission to life every day, and for the families who entrust Japhet with something as important as the education and development of their children. We do not take that responsibility lightly.

And to our students: this year, be willing to try something difficult. Ask good questions. Be kind when it would be easier not to be. Help someone who needs it. Make mistakes and learn from them. And take advantage of the opportunity you have to become not only a stronger student, but a stronger person.

There may never have been a more important time for an education grounded in character.

And there may never have been a better place to receive one.

Welcome back to Japhet School. I know you'll have an outstanding school year!