

REMARKS TO DIOCESAN COUNCIL
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John W. Cooper Ph.D.,
Headmaster, TMI – The Episcopal School of Texas

Good afternoon, I am John Cooper, Headmaster at TMI - The Episcopal School of Texas. I am honored to speak to you today as the 30th headmaster of TMI, the flagship school of the Diocese of West Texas, one of 27 schools in the diocese, and its only high school.

TMI serves 437 students in 6th through 12th grades, including 37 boarding students. It is one of the oldest and most prestigious private schools in Texas and the entire Southwest. Next fall, TMI will be 120 years old. The school was founded by the first bishop of the Diocese of West Texas, James Steptoe Johnston. Next spring, it will be 25 years since TMI moved from Alamo Heights in San Antonio to its present campus in the Hill Country on the northwest side of the city.

I began my career in education as a college professor and later as an academic dean. My wife, Joan, who is here with me today has also served as a college professor as well as a psychiatric social worker. We have enjoyed a wonderful life in the halls of academe. Next year will mark my twentieth year as a Headmaster. Since coming to TMI last summer from Chicago, Joan and I have felt so blessed to join the wonderful community of TMI, to discover our new church home at Grace Episcopal Church in San Antonio, and to observe the deep loyalty and support that our diocesan clergy and Episcopal laity have for the school. Without your dedication to continuing the mission of TMI, our school would not have come so far in these 12 decades of our history.

Longevity is only one measure of our success. TMI is staying true to our founder's vision of a church school that prepares its students for higher education and the professions, while forming their character in the direction of servant leadership.

In fact, servant leadership is a term you hear all the time in the halls and classrooms of TMI. Whether a student is in the Corps of Cadets or in the civilian student group, leadership is the underlying topic of nearly everything we teach and study. Athletics, fine arts, community service, academic excellence, student government—everything prepares our students to be servant leaders in the world of tomorrow.

We preserve the founding ideals of the school while making sure our curriculum stays a step ahead, increasing opportunities for hands-on learning and adopting new technologies so that our students will be in the forefront of their generation as they enter college and their professional lives.

In many ways, the 21st-century TMI still mirrors very closely the school envisioned by Bishop Johnston in 1893. Students take college-preparatory courses, attend chapel every day and take Religious Studies courses; they are expected to live up to rigorous standards for academic accomplishment and self-discipline. We still require students to memorize poetry, to learn another language, and to develop their full potential in service and leadership.

At the same time, the ways we prepare our students have changed to keep up with changing times. TMI was once male-only; it is now coeducational. Our award-winning military program was once required; it is now optional. We teach subjects undreamed of at the turn of the last century, using technology that Bishop Johnston and his first 12 students could never have predicted.

As you may already know, a TMI education is founded on Four Pillars – Academics, Athletics, Military, and Spirituality. I am pleased to tell you we are seeing exciting progress in every one of these areas.

In Academics, we have been blessed with gifts of new equipment for learning in every discipline, as well as the kind of bright, motivated students who make teaching such a worthwhile profession.

We have a brand-new, state-of-the-art telescope and observatory, thanks to the generosity of alumni who made it their mission to help current students see into new worlds. Thanks to this gift, next year, we'll be able to offer science electives in Astronomy and Meteorology.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of parent and faculty coaches, we have a TMI Robotics team that has won design awards in competition with much larger schools. Again, with the help of generous donors, we have smartboards and tablet computers to help our faculty and students connect with a new world of information.

We have students who have been recognized in the National Merit Scholarship and National Achievement competitions, as well as others who have earned medals in the national Spanish and Latin exams. Of the three students chosen for our most

prestigious Alkek and Frost merit scholarships, all were recognized in the Duke University Talent Identification Program, as were many of TMI's middle-school students.

All of the new teachers hired this year hold advanced degrees, as do many of our returning faculty. Seven faculty members hold Ph.D.'s. Our teachers bring great creativity to the fast-moving world of education. For instance, World Geography has been taught at TMI since the earliest days of the school;

This year, World Geography is held in our new Socratic Classroom, where text and lecture are supplemented by new approaches to teaching. Students are seated at a large seminar table and invited to take part in discussion, research topics on tablet computers, and react to multimedia presentations on the two smartboards at either end of the room. At times, they leave the classroom to work on an archaeological dig in the TMI Nature Center, which was built by students and teachers and is improved each year during our annual Green Day.

Next year, we will be offering a new course in Corporate and Investment Finance. Taught by members of the Math Department, this elective will teach seniors financial statement analysis, valuation of stocks and bonds, and financial strategies and management. To our knowledge, TMI is one of only a few private schools in the nation to offer such a course, which will be much more challenging and practical than the standard high-school business course.

In athletics this year, we've seen TMI students claim state championships in cross-country and swimming. Our boys' varsity basketball team just became district champions, boasting a record of 32-7, and are on their way to the state playoffs. Panther athletes have received All-City, All-District and Academic All-State recognition, and our tennis team recently swept tournament honors.

Thanks to donations to a successful Athletic Campaign, we have a new track that has allowed TMI to host cross-country and track meets. Our main athletic field just won a national competition as one of the best-maintained in the nation, and last summer, the Oklahoma Thunder chose our Frost Athletic Center for their practices during the NBA Western Conference Finals.

Thanks to our military faculty and a parent coach, the TMI Corps of Cadets fielded a team in this year's national CyberPatriot competition, in which students learn the basics of cybersecurity, the next frontier in national defense. This year at its annual

Army Formal Inspection in April, the Corps will have the chance to earn “Honor Unit with Distinction” for the 20th consecutive year.

In spirituality, our chaplain, Father Nathan Bostian, continues to balance Morning Prayer services with innovative programming such as a Theology of Art program in which he demonstrated that all creativity is a reflection of the Creator of us all. We have extended our community-service requirements to include our Middle School students. Our Interact community-service group helps connect all our students and families with projects that help many local organizations. This year, TMI students assumed responsibility for the Hand in Hand fashion show, benefiting Morgan’s Wonderland, a San Antonio theme park for people with special needs.

At present, TMI has 437 students, and our Office of Admission reports a 10 percent increase in applications. Next year, 25 percent of our students will receive financial aid, totaling approximately \$585,000; and 34 students will receive merit scholarships, totaling approximately \$85,000. These programs are wonderful tools to increase the diversity of our student body and to attract and retain the most gifted and talented students. We thank all who have contributed funds to make this possible.

As we look forward to important anniversaries in the life our school, there will be much to celebrate in the next year. I look forward to inviting all of you to our campus to see what the TMI of the 21st century looks like and to ask humbly for your continued support of what its founder called “a school set apart to the glory of (God’s) great name.” I pray that our combined stewardship will keep TMI on a path toward even greater accomplishments in the years to come. Thank you for all you have done, and for what you will do, to support our ministry.