Parents Council
OF WASHINGTON
CONNECTING SCHOOLS • SHARING IDEAS • ENGAGING PARENTS

Thriving in a Moment of Unprecedented Change

2026 Orientation Program
September 14, 2026
National Cathedral School

AGENDA

10:00 – 10:30am	**Breakfast/Networking**
10:30 – 10:40am	**Welcome** *Erik van der Merwe, President* *Parents Council of Washington*
10:40 – 11:00am	***Thriving in a Moment of Unprecedented Change*** *Dr. Elinor Scully, Head of School* *National Cathedral School*
11:00 – 11:15am	**Maximizing the PCW Partnership with Your School Community** *Brian Jacobson & Nicole Lewis Tyson* *Board Members & Orientation Program Co-Chairs* *Parents Council of Washington*
11:15am – 12:00pm	***Share, Connect, Engage:* Best Practices Roundtables** *PCW Board Members/School Liaisons, PCW Representatives, and Parent Association Presidents*

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2026-2027 PCW Program Schedule

Program	*Date*	*Time*	*Venue*	*Audience*	*PCW Rep Role*
PCW Orientation	Monday, Sept. 14, 2026	10:00am - 12:00pm	National Cathedral School	PCW Reps and PA Presidents	**ATTEND!** Distribute material*
PA Presidents' Discussion Kickoff	Thursday, Sept. 24, 2025	10:00am - 11:00am	Virtual	PA Presidents	N/A
Movie "Screenagers: Generation AI"	Thursday, Oct. 8, 2026	Morning	Avalon Theatre	All PCW Member School Communities	Publicize/Promote **ATTEND!** Distribute material*
AI Experts Panel "Growing up in the Age of AI: What Parents Should Know" Russell Shaw Rebecca Winthrop Angela Virtu	November 2026	Evening	Virtual	All PCW Member School Communities	Publicize/Promote **ATTEND!** Distribute material*
Upper School Student Leader Breakfast	Thursday, Feb. 18, 2027	8:30am - 12:30pm	Madeira	Member School Selected Students	Ensure Administrator and Counselor have date and know to select students
Speaker Lisa Damour, Webinar	Feb. 2027	Lunchtime	Virtual	All PCW Member School Communities	Publicize/Promote **ATTEND!** Distribute material*
Upper School Dean of Students' Breakfast	Wednesday, Mar. 10, 2027	8:30 am - 10:30am	Sidwell	Upper School Deans of Students	Ensure Dean of Students has date on calendar
Middle School Student Leader Breakfast	Tuesday, Apr. 20, 2027	8:30 am - 11:30 am	The Langley School	Member School Selected Students	Ensure Administrator and Counselor have date and know to select students
Member School Panel "Executive Functioning in Younger Brains"	April 2027	6:00pm- 7:30pm	St. Patrick's	All PCW Member School Communities	Publicize/Promote **ATTEND!** Distribute material*

**Distribute Material = Access/distribute info beforehand; then program summaries/write-ups from PCW website after program completion.*

Updated: 9/10/2026

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Program Descriptions

The Parents Council of Washington (PCW) promotes excellence in education by fostering communication among parents, students and independent schools in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. This mission is accomplished via multiple programs, resources and networking opportunities connecting schools, sharing ideas and engaging parents.

PCW programs for member school communities focus on relevant issues, research and practices in the fields of child development, education and parenting. All programs (with the exception of the Deans' Event) result in follow-up written summaries, posted and available on the PCW website. These and numerous other resources are readily available for all to access at www.parentscouncil.org.

Programs are designed for differing audiences. Below is a description of the types of programs offered throughout the academic year with information on the respective target audience.

Orientation

Orientation presents member schools with insight from a highly-regarded speaker, as well as an overview of PCW and what it has to offer. PCW Representatives and PA Presidents meet and network with other school leaders and are provided guidance on how to best participate in PCW programs and utilize resources available throughout the school year. In recent years, speakers have included William Stixrud and Ned Johnson, Susanna Jones, Elinor Scully, Patricia Lyons, and Michelle Kriebel.

Speakers

The speaker series features prominent authors, educators and experts presenting on today's issues, theories and practices impacting our independent school communities. In past years, we have had two speakers per year – one in Fall and the other in Spring. PCW speakers have included Lynn Lyons, Beth Kobliner, Glenn Whitman, Tina Payne Bryson, Jessica Lahey, Susan Cain, Brigid Schulte, Ron Lieber, Brad Sachs, Annie Fox, Ned Johnson, Robert Kosasky, and William Stixrud.

Lower School Forum

A panel presentation in which presenters share thoughts on best practices for raising healthy, connected and engaged learners. Member school parents are invited to come listen, share perspectives and seek advice in an open and frank exchange focusing on child development, education and parenting.

Movie Screening

A screening of a current and informative movie related to parenting and/or education. In the past few years, PCW has shown *Screenagers*.

Best Practices Forum

This forum assembles a panel of 3-4 administrators and/or faculty for a discussion and Q & A session on best practices related to the PCW annual theme. Attendees include member school administrators, educators and parents. Prior to the program, PCW asks all member schools to submit their best practices on the chosen topic. Subsequent to the program, PCW writes a summary of panelist presentations and combines it with school submissions into a comprehensive e-binder on the topic. E-binders are a tremendous resource for member schools and are maintained on the PCW website for access by interested parties. Prior topics include: Promoting Student Well-Being, Raising 21st Century Citizens, Your Child's Brain, Finding Balance, Re-Thinking Success, Community Service, 21st Century Technology, Kindness, Diversity, Parent Networking, and Students & Stress.

Upper School Student Leader Breakfast

This program is open to school-selected juniors and seniors from member schools (2 students per school). The morning program (which includes both small and large group sessions) is a confidential and moderated forum in which student leaders explore topics relevant to high school life. A summary of the discussion, with no attribution to or identifying information on individual participants, is prepared and shared with Deans of Students (*see Deans' Event below*).

Middle School Student Leader Breakfast

The middle school breakfast is for seventh grade students, accompanied by a school counselor or administrator. Each member school selects two students to attend. Students discuss relevant issues in both large and small groups, with the guidance of a moderator. Topics often include self-image, technology, social status, communication, academics, etc. At the same time, in a separate session, middle school counselors meet for a discussion of common interests and concerns.

Deans' Event

A unique opportunity for upper school Deans of Students to come together and collaboratively and confidentially explore issues of shared interest. Prior to the event, for discussion purposes, Deans receive a summary of issues and insights from the Upper School Student Leader Breakfast (with no attribution to or identification of any specific student or school).

PA Presidents' Monthly Discussions

An opportunity for incoming member school Parent Association Presidents to gain insight, perspective and tips from outgoing PA Presidents on "What I know now that I wish I knew then." The meeting allows PA Presidents to speak with their peers from other member schools. They have the opportunity to hear differing approaches and discuss common problems affecting all PA Presidents.

Updated: Sept. 2026

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Who We Are

Established in 1964 to create connections, collaborations and community around education and parenting, PCW is governed by a rotating volunteer Board of Directors. All members of the Board (16 at present) are parents of member school students or graduates, serving 3-year terms. The Board, with the help of a part-time administrator, organizes and coordinates all programs and resources.

Mission

To promote excellence in education by fostering communication among parents, students and independent schools in the Washington, DC area through programs, resources and networking opportunities.

Who We Serve

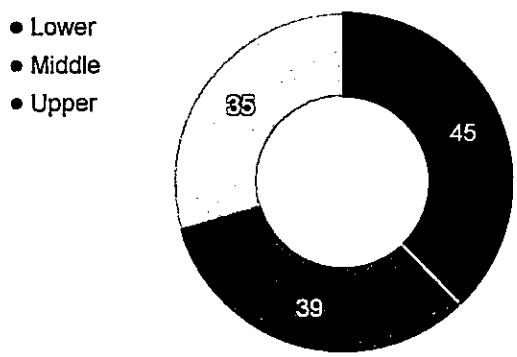
Eligible members are independent schools (Preschool-12) in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, paying annual dues based on type of school and enrollment, and appointing school representatives to liaison with PCW to benefit their school communities via programs, resources and networking opportunities.

➢ **CURRENT MEMBER PROFILE:**

- Member Schools Represented (58)
  - ✓ Lower (45), Middle (39), Upper (35)
  - ✓ DC (21), Maryland (25), Virginia (12)
  - ✓ Co-ed (45), single gender/girl (8), single gender/boy (5)
  - ✓ Religious affiliated (25), secular (33)
- Students Represented (approximately 27,000)

Division Representation

Number of Schools with Divisions



What We Offer

PCW provides member school communities with robust programming, resources, and networking opportunities all pertaining to education, child development and/or parenting.

➢ **ANNUAL PROGRAMS**

- **Orientation Program** – *A gathering of PCW School Representatives and Parent Association (PA) Presidents.*
- **Speaker Series Events** – *Typically two per year, intended for all in our member school communities.*
- **Lower and Middle School Forum** – *Panel or speaker focused on our younger students, intended for all member lower and middle school communities.*
- **Movie Screening/Panel/Workshop** – *An event focused on a current topic of interest for all in our member school communities.*
- **Deans of Students' Breakfast** – *Hosted for upper school Deans of Students as a follow up to the Upper School Student Leader Breakfast.*
- **Upper School and Middle School Student Leader Breakfasts** – *Moderator led breakfast for school selected leaders to share ideas and opinions. Middle School breakfast includes a professional development session for chaperones.*
- **Informal Discussions for PA Presidents** – *Monthly informal discussion throughout the year.*

➢ **RESOURCES**

- PCW website, instagram, and access to calendar with upcoming events
- Archived summaries of past PCW programs
- Monthly checklists and materials for PCW School Representatives & PA Presidents
- One page takeaways and recordings from PCW programs

➢ **NETWORKING**

- Various opportunities to network with fellow Administrators, Faculty, Parents, and Students
- PA Presidents Zoom regularly and connect via WhatsApp to discuss best practices and hot topics
- Showcase your and explore other independent schools in the Washington, DC area

How We Do It

✓ PCW Board member liaisons **maintain contact** with member school administrators, PA Presidents, and PCW Representatives to coordinate, advertise and deliver PCW programs, resources, and opportunities.

✓ PA Presidents and PCW Representatives **share** program/resource information with their school communities and encourage attendance at programs.

✓ PA Presidents and PCW Representatives **attend** programs as well.

✓ Member school administrators and faculty **present** at a variety of the programs, while other local and national level speakers and authors are highlighted at programs such as our *Speaker Series.*

✓ Interested and well-suited member schools **host** annual PCW programs.

✓ PA Presidents and PCW Representatives interested in **volunteering** for a position on the PCW Board of Directors are encouraged to contact *administration@parentscouncil.org.*

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2026-2027
PCW Board Liaisons to Member Schools
(listed by Member School)

Member School	***Board Liaison***
Academy of the Holy Cross, The	Lisa Monroe Briscoe
Aidan Montessori	Patricia Garffer
Alexandria Country Day School	Lauren Barber
Beauvoir	Mary Vitale
Browne Academy	Karen Gibian
Bullis School	Nisha Sankaran
Burgundy Farm Country Day School	Lauren Barber
Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School	Lisa Monroe Briscoe
Commonwealth Academy	Lauren Barber
Concord Hill School	Cara Hur
Congressional School	Karen Gibian
Connelly School of the Holy Child	Jen Scott
Edmund Burke School	Patricia Garffer
Field School, The	Lauren Barber
Flint Hill School	Denise Prince
Foxcroft School	Jenny Gillespie
Georgetown Day School	Nicole Lewis Tyson
Georgetown Preparatory School	Denise Yarbough-Smith
Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School	Cara Hur
Gonzaga College High School	Brian Jacobson
Grace Episcopal Day School	Nicole Lewis Tyson
Green Acres School	Denise Yarbough-Smith
Green Hedges School	Nisha Sankaran
Harbor School, The	Karen Gibian
Holton-Arms School	Jenny Gillespie

Member School	***Board Liaison***
Holy Trinity School	Jen Scott
Lab School of Washington, The	Mary Vitale
Landon School	Jenny Gillespie
Langley School, The	Karen Gibian
Lowell School	Brian Jacobson
Madeira School, The	Denise Yarbough-Smith
Maret School	Nisha Sankaran
McLean School	Brian Jacobson
Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School	Brian Jacobson
National Cathedral School	Cara Hur
National Child Research Center	Patricia Garffer
National Presbyterian School	Mary Vitale
Norwood School	Denise Yarbough-Smith
Oneness Family School	Jen Scott
Our Lady of Good Counsel High School	Denise Yarbough-Smith
Potomac School, The	Lauren Barber
Primary Day School, The	Cara Hur
River School, The	Nisha Sankaran
Sandy Spring Friends School	Karen Gibian
Seneca Academy	Lisa Monroe Briscoe
Sheridan School	Nisha Sankaran
Sidwell Friends School	Nicole Lewis Tyson
Siena School, The	Lisa Monroe Briscoe
St. Albans School	Denise Prince
St. Andrew's Episcopal School	Nicole Lewis Tyson
St. Anselm's Abbey School	Jenny Gillespie
St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School	Denise Prince
St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School	Jen Scott
Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart	Denise Prince
Washington Episcopal School	Brian Jacobson
Washington International School	Patricia Garffer
Washington Waldorf School	Mary Vitale
Woods Academy, The	Lisa Monroe Briscoe