



From the Office of the Headmaster

**Tuscaloosa Academy**

Think. Play. Belong.

## Why THINK.

What we mean by THINK is *academic excellence*. By academic excellence we mean outstanding teaching and a rigorous curriculum presented to students within a quality facility with ample resources.

At TA there are no “gaps” in teaching quality. We have the freedom and the purpose to insist that outstanding teaching occurs at every level and we have the means, through systematic and generous professional development, to support the growth of outstanding teachers.

By THINK we also mean a rigorous, balanced and thoughtful curriculum. At TA there is a thoughtful and empirically-based scope and sequence to the curriculum across grades and across subjects. For example, our preschool is one of only two in Tuscaloosa accredited by the NAEYC, which has the most stringent requirements in the nation. All students at all grades have the opportunity to participate in formal music instruction and our Lower School has a nationally accredited music program. Formal second language instruction is available for all students, grades K-12. We have a laptop program in grades 7-12 that is an integral part of our daily curriculum. Finally, we have nationally recognized, award-winning teachers.

THINK also means we have the academic outcomes to support the rhetoric. First, in an exit interview with thirty 2009-2010 Seniors, *every one of them* when asked *described the outstanding quality of the teachers* as a superior aspect of a TA education. Similarly, discussions with graduates inevitably indicate how prepared they thought they were for college. More directly we can point to 100% of our students not only graduating but also 100% of our graduates going to 4-year colleges, including some of the most prestigious colleges in the country, such as Harvard, Duke, Vanderbilt and Emory. We can point to fourteen National Merit Scholarship Finalists (including one in 2009-2010), and fifteen National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists (including two in 2009-2010). Our standardized test data indicates that we have the highest average SAT and ACT Composite Scores of any school in Tuscaloosa County over the past 20 years. We consistently rank in the top 3 schools out of 53 AISA schools on the Stanford Achievement Test composite scores among 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders over the past 20 years. We have a very strong slate of Advanced Placement classes which are open to all Junior and Senior students, including: English Language, English Literature, Calculus, United States History, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Spanish, French, and Studio Art. This year we have 27 students taking 55 AP exams in 10 areas. Thus, based on these outcomes, we also mean *college preparatory* when we say THINK.

Finally, THINK suggests a habit; it focuses on a process. We feel that the process of creating “THINKERS” is critical. To create life-long learners, those who enjoy learning for its own sake...that’s the ultimate goal. Via passionate and knowledgeable educators, stimulating curriculum and outstanding academic facilities, we fulfill this goal.