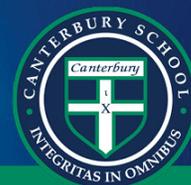


visionary *trustee* inventor  
friend counselor *parent mentor*  
*student teacher* coach leader writer

# Each *person* matters.

*ambassador* supporter *guardian*  
*administrator* *tutor* founder  
*artist* athlete *scholar*



## A Q&A: Bill Ennist, Head of School, shares what "Each person matters" means to him.

*"Each person matters" is more than just a billboard, a hashtag or a catchphrase. It's a culmination of many stories that lead back to a special place found on Covington and Smith Roads in Fort Wayne, Ind., where each fiber is navy blue and white, where each action is filled with integrity and where each person matters.*

*For us at Canterbury School, these three words serve as the stage to share what makes us different, valuable and successful. Our small class sizes, faculty mentorship programs, academic triumphs and character development initiatives are profound. But the stories – the memories and the experiences – that truly set Canterbury apart start and end with the people. Today, **Bill Ennist, Head of School**, shares what "Each person matters" means to him.*



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### **Q: Why did you choose to come to Canterbury School as the Head of School in 2016?**

**Bill Ennist (BE):** I chose Canterbury School because of its focus on character development. Before I came, I was sent a variety of printed materials by the school that talked about Chapel, the Positive Coaching Alliance, the religion and diversity programs – all from the perspective of providing students with opportunity to build character.

When I spoke to students during the interview process, they were all speaking quite naturally about these very same areas of school culture and the impact that they had had on their character development. I was very impressed by the connection between what we said we did for students and what students perceived that we had done for them – that has been pretty rare, in my experience.

### **Q: When you hear "Each person matters," what is your first impression, and how does it resonate with you?**

**BE:** As a parent, I want to know that my child's interests, needs and talents are known and supported by his or her teachers, advisors, coaches and administrators. My child is unique, and I really want that to be recognized and appreciated.

As a teacher, I want to know that the efforts I make on behalf of students inside and outside my classroom every day make a difference in the life of the school, and add their own distinct dimension to the fabric of the school community.

As an administrator, I want to know the decisions I make to benefit students and the school add value to the experience of students and parents alike. Whatever our role in the school community, we want to know that who we are and what we do are important – that we are valued members of Canterbury.

*Continued on the following page.*

**Q: Why is this statement important to education?**

**BE:** Canterbury was founded on the dedication and effort of a multitude of families who wanted a better educational experience for their children. During the beginning years of the school in the late 1970's and early 1980's, each person literally mattered – each hour of service getting the buildings ready for students, each dollar gifted to the school, each word-of-mouth recommendation to a local family, each college acceptance.

Together, the individuals of this community created Canterbury, and that's a general spirit that continues to this day. I think this statement simultaneously captures the history, current success, and aspirations of the school beautifully.

**Q: What is it about the people at Canterbury that sets them apart?**

**BE:** Canterbury is truly a big, multi-generational family, the culture of which reflects that family feel. Everyone here truly seem to know and care about everyone which, in some ways, is emblematic of our location in Fort Wayne, which has been described to me as “The world's biggest small town,” but in other ways it has to do with the community feel that has been passed down to new generations of our families since our founding in 1977.

You feel that sentiment palpably at large school events such as the Lower School Musical, the 8th Grade Play, and our sporting events. Siblings, parents, grandparents, alumni, parents of alumni and friends all come together to cheer our students on and celebrate their accomplishments. It is wonderful to be part of such a positive communal energy.

**Q: What “matters statement” is most important to you at Canterbury, and why?**

**BE:** I think all of them are important, and what I love about the concept is the way that the noun in the middle of the phrase can be substituted out in so many specific and meaningful ways – “Each Parent Matters” as a means of encouraging volunteerism; “Each Gift Matters” as a way to inspire giving; “Each Memory Matters” as a welcome to alumni at Homecoming.

This is important because there are so many single details that all come together to create a fantastic experience for every child at Canterbury, and having a way to highlight each of those aspects of school life in such a short, yet impactful, format is incredibly helpful to all of us.

**Q: As we start the new school year, what is your advice for your current Canterbury families and those who may consider Canterbury in the future?**

**BE:** Know that your child and you both matter to us very much – your experiences, your successes and challenges, and your aspirations are as important and meaningful to us as they are to you. We have an amazing array of programming and opportunities for each child to discover and develop his or her unique interests and strengths, as well as a dedicated group of educators whose daily work is geared toward helping students maximize their individual potential. This is not an approach – or a mindset – that is common or easily implemented outside of the school community, and it is what makes the Canterbury experience truly a gift for each of our students. ■

