



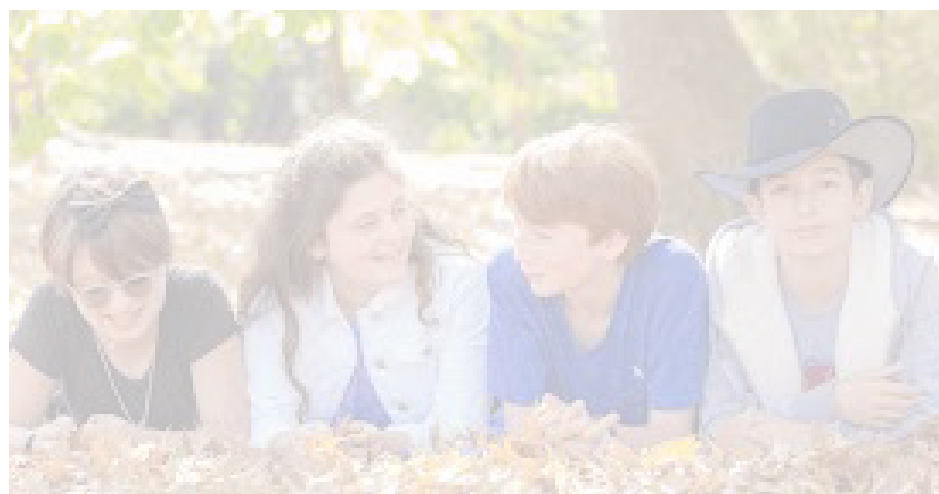
## The Challenge: Finding + Reaching Your People

The Sycamore School (TSS) is a relatively new, independent nonprofit secondary school that opened in September 2017 in Arlington, Virginia. Its mission is to provide a dynamic, nurturing, and personalized education that inspires a passion for learning, self-discovery, and connection to the community.

In building a nonprofit private school from the ground up, founder and Head of School Dr. Karen Ewart engaged Arlington Strategy to develop and implement a marketing plan. The plan identified strategic messaging and communications tactics to position the school, help establish its brand, and recruit its first class.

A brand new school competing for students with access to the area's top-notch, free public education systems, TSS needed to quickly build brand awareness and legitimacy. But they had to start by finding their people—**understanding who they were talking to and how to reach them**. We helped them identify their target audience, which was and continues to be families whose children would otherwise attend public school, rather than those who traditionally lean toward private education.

Priority objectives included identifying and attracting students who are intelligent but for one reason or another are not reaching their full potential at their current school; increasing the draw of student populations from diverse ethnic, economic and religious backgrounds; and achieving yearly enrollment targets as set by the school.





## MONA Moms: Have You Heard?

SMALL CLASSES. WEEKLY FIELD TRIPS.  
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING.

*We do school differently in Arlington*

ROLLING ADMISSIONS, 5TH-10TH GRADES

THE SYCAMORE SCHOOL  
Learning Rediscovered

**A School Kids Want to Attend**

“Our child comes home excited (and talking!) about what she is learning in school.”

-TSS Parent

**Attend a School Information Session**

Prospective parents and students are invited to a tour to see first hand how The Sycamore School does school differently. You will meet current students and teachers, and see our experiential, hands-on approach to teaching and learning.

**Tue. Dec. 4    Thu. Jan. 17**

*All Information Sessions are held from 8-9 a.m.  
See website for additional Information Sessions.*

**The Sycamore School** opened in September 2017 with an inaugural class of 6th-8th graders. **For the 2018-19 school year, the school has expanded to serve 5th-10th grades,** and will go through 12th grade as the students age up. The Sycamore School provides personalized, engaging and experiential learning, helping students make connections across content areas and to the real world.

[thesycamoreschoolva.org](http://thesycamoreschoolva.org)

Located at The Arlington Center

4600 North Fairfax Drive, 3rd floor, Arlington, VA 22203

**Our Mission:**  
To provide a dynamic, nurturing and personalized education that inspires a passion for learning, self-discovery and connection to the community.

**The Sycamore School**  
Helping students find their place...in the classroom, in the community, in the world.

THE SYCAMORE SCHOOL  
Learning Rediscovered

[www.thesycamoreschoolva.org](http://www.thesycamoreschoolva.org)

**Helping students find their place... in the classroom, in the community, in the world.**

**WHY THE SYCAMORE SCHOOL?**

- The middle school years are a pivotal, predictive, and possibly life-altering stage of development.
- Conventional education is focused on standardized tests, rigid standards and acceleration that diminishes curiosity and the desire to learn.
- Conventional education often creates excessive stress and can undermine individual development of character, connection to the community and compassion.
- Traditional practices force students into one way of learning and thinking, producing a system of winners and losers. Our model needs strong leaders, thinkers, and doers, not just winners.

**WE BELIEVE**

- Young people are curious, resilient, and capable of creating innovative solutions to real-world problems.
- Learning should be meaningful, challenging and engaging.
- Intelligence and ability are not fixed, but can be developed.
- Learning is messy, not linear. It's a process of trying, making changes, and moving forward.
- Learning requires a partnership between students, staff and parents.

We can provide the tools and opportunities to reimagine your child's desire to learn.

**Education is more than good grades!**

**Is The Sycamore School right for you?**

**PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS**

- Display curiosity
- Want to succeed
- Seek inspiration and engagement
- Feel undervalued or dismissed at school
- Do not want to be defined by standardized test scores
- Have dreams beyond college

**PROSPECTIVE PARENTS**

- Focus on student growth versus grades
- Are willing to partner with staff to support a healthy learning community
- Want their child to succeed in life, not just school
- Are tired of struggling with child over attendance and homework
- Would welcome decreased homework and increased family and leisure time

**Conventional Schools**

- Students can get lost, feel invisible and vulnerable in a large school setting.
- Large classes with teachers as focus.
- Standardized test-based curriculum.
- Common instruction for entire class.
- All teaching happens in the classroom.

**The Sycamore School**

- Students feel safe in a nurturing, inclusive learning community.
- Small classes focusing on student-teacher collaboration.
- Dynamic curriculum with real-world application.
- Students help shape individualized instruction.
- Learning happens everywhere— in the classroom and the community.

**Enrolling for Fall 2017**

Our inaugural class will include students in grades 6-8 and expand as students advance through grade 12. For more information, please visit [thesycamoreschoolva.org](http://thesycamoreschoolva.org)

# Our Solutions

Arlington Strategy has been on board as The Sycamore School’s marketing partner since before its founding in 2017. We began by developing a strategic plan that positioned the school within its unique niche: to be the place that enables students who have found themselves unmotivated, disenfranchised, invisible, or vulnerable in their previous educational experience to thrive.

We have been responsible for nearly all aspects of the school’s ongoing, high-level campaign to build brand and acquire new students. Our team worked with The Sycamore School to establish objectives; create mission and vision statements; and craft messaging—including language around value proposition, point-of-view, offerings, and differentiators.

## Ongoing Multi-Channel Communications Campaign

Our plan ties communications tactics to the organization’s objectives, oriented around both brand establishment and student acquisition. In addition, we collaborate with local groups who comprise the TSS target demographic. Over the past 3+ years, we have delivered multi-channel communications solutions including print collateral (brochures, event fliers, direct mail postcards), website copy, email marketing blasts, social media strategies, and paid digital and print advertising.

## Customer Acquisition Campaign

As part of our work for TSS, Arlington Strategy developed a distinct acquisition campaign aimed at driving attendance at school information sessions—with the intent to increase school applications. Our challenge was to strategically leverage extremely limited nonprofit resources to reach new audiences within a 10-mile radius of Arlington. The resulting campaign appeals to families of high performing students whose current schools were not a good fit. Messaging and communications highlight the school’s value proposition by showcasing “day in the life” stories and leveraging parent/student testimonials. Collateral employs a mix of professional and amateur photography for authenticity.

THE SYCAMORE SCHOOL  
Learning Rediscovered

## We Do School Differently In Arlington

SMALL CLASSES | WEEKLY FIELD TRIPS | EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

### Reignite a love of learning.

**Cultivating intellectual curiosity, independent thought, and a love of learning.**

**Thank You Readers!**

BEST PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL

**BEST OF Arlington MAGAZINE 2020 A TOP VOTE GETTER**

**5th-12th Grades**

4600 North Fairfax Drive, 3rd floor  
Arlington, VA 22203  
703-717-5360

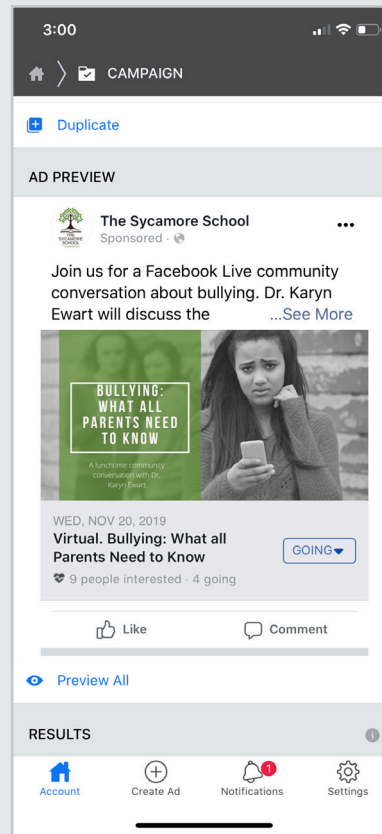
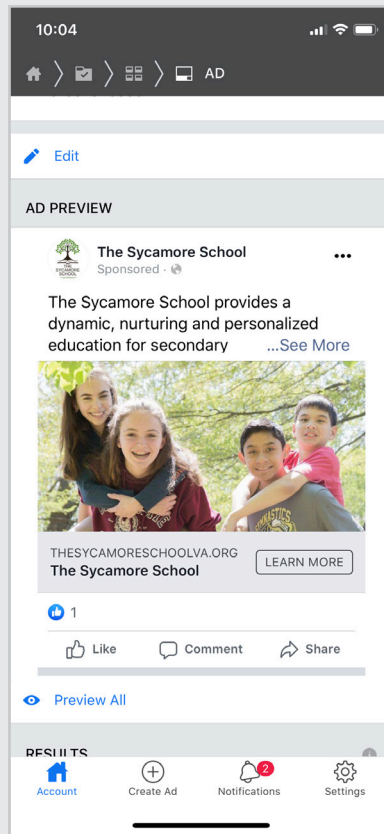
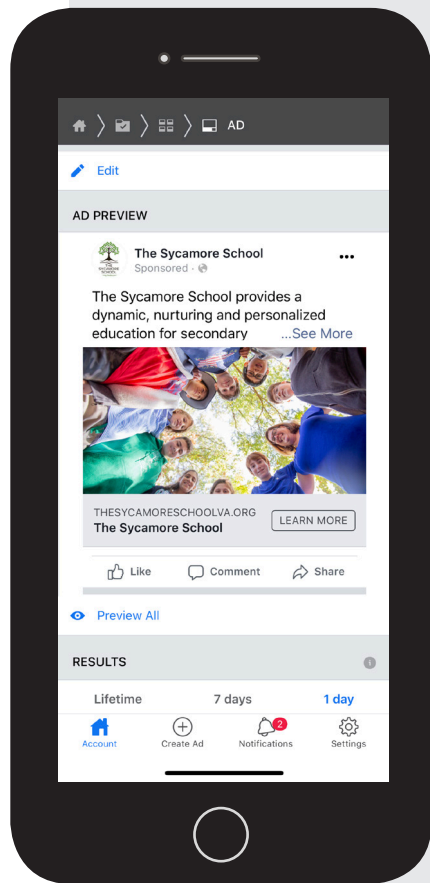
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

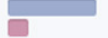









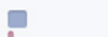


















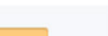





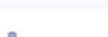
**A School Kids Actually Want to Attend**

“The Sycamore School is a godsend. It has helped my child enjoy school again and find her curiosity.”

**-Sycamore Parent**

clockwise from above left – communications collateral: event flyers, direct mail postcards, advertisements



| Published             | Post  | Type  | Targeting   | Reach   | Engagement  | Promote   |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 02/27/2017<br>4:15 pm |  This article speaks to a common parenting problem - doing too       |  |  | 1.2K  | 238<br>54  | <a href="#">Boost Post</a>                      |
| 12/30/2016<br>9:34 pm |  Teacher stress and dissatisfaction is a growing concern in our c    |  |  | 1.1K  | 37<br>22   | <a href="#">View Results</a><br>Boosted: \$5.00 |
| 01/04/2017<br>7:08 pm |  Learn about Northern Virginia's newest independent, nonprofit s     |  |  | 1K    | 53<br>16   | <a href="#">View Results</a><br>Boosted: \$5.00 |
| 01/05/2017<br>8:37 pm |  "One of the primary reasons I created The Sycamore School wa        |  |  | 707   | 34<br>17   | <a href="#">Boost Post</a>                      |
| 03/02/2017<br>1:37 pm |  Come see The Sycamore School in action! We have an Open             |  |  | 664   | 84<br>20   | <a href="#">Boost Post</a>                      |
| 02/09/2017<br>8:14 am |  Is your child a good fit for The Sycamore School, a new Choice      |  |  | 646   | 65<br>21   | <a href="#">Boost Post</a>                      |
| 01/25/2017<br>7:04 pm |  Good news today, it's been a long time coming - we've signed        |  |  | 621   | 87<br>95   | <a href="#">Boost Post</a>                      |
| 02/21/2017<br>3:42 pm |  This article highlights the need to update our schools to reflect t |  |  | 583   | 23<br>25   | <a href="#">Boost Post</a>                      |

Facebook ads and Live Event; strategic social media measurement

The small size of TSS allows all students to feel like they are part of a warm and accepting community.

-- Sycamore parent

## Campaign Features + Tools

### Paid Advertising

- Print ads in hyperlocal publications such as *Arlington Magazine*
- Digital advertising on ARLnow and PoPville
- ARLnow sponsored blog post
- Open House ads in the *Sun-Gazette*
- *Arlington Magazine* email blasts
- *Washington Parent* ad
- *Falls Church News-Press* digital ads
- Facebook ads and promoted events
- Peachjar flyers to APS families

### Strategic Communications

- Email marketing
- Social media
- Customized event flyers for Mothers of North Arlington
- Yard signs

### Direct Mail

- Brochures
- Postcards

## Results

Arlington Strategy has helped TSS achieve **135% growth** from its opening in 2017 to 2020. Year-over-year growth was 65% from 2017 to 2018, and 42% from 2018 to 2019. TSS is now recognized for the innovative environment it provides for its families. They also have established authority and a reputation for leadership among area schools.

- Best of Arlington | Top Vote Getter Best Private High School 2020 and 2019
- *Washington Family Magazine* | Best for Families - Best Private High School 2019
- *Falls Church News-Press* | Best Private High School Finalist 2018