



**DETERMINED LEADER:** Head of School Suzanne Fogarty has led Lincoln School through many recent changes with a committed attitude and speedy execution.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

## Decisive direction delivering results

BY NANCY KIRSCH | Contributing Writer

**SINCE SEPTEMBER 2014**, Lincoln School, the nation's only all-girl school rooted in Quaker values, has undergone significant transformations with Head of School Suzanne Fogarty's dynamic leadership.

At her initiative, Lincoln established partnerships with Brown University, Rhode Island School of Design, the Steel Yard and other organizations; discontinued the Advanced Placement program in favor of independent research and more elective opportunities; offered educational travel programs to India and Cuba; and built a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts/architecture and math) Hub for Girls.

Upper School students can enroll in college-level, credit-bearing classes in Brown University's School of Engineering and RISD's School of Architecture. "[They] are a great collaboration and are target areas where girls and women are underrepresented," said Fogarty. Learning blacksmithing, jewelry making and welding at the Steel Yard, as Upper and Middle schools' students do, said Fogarty, "is a provocative way to define female strength."

Fogarty believes that learning is no longer relegated to the school's bricks-and-mortar facilities, and expanding Lincoln's campus to include these partnerships is critically important. "We want Lincoln students to bring the world back to our ... campus," Fogarty said.

Under Fogarty's leadership and in partnership with The World Leadership School in Boulder, Colo., Lincoln launched the India Program, a trimester-long program that culminates in students spending two weeks in India, including Mumbai and a village, Chinchoti.

"Unlike other global programs, we return to the same place every year," said Fogarty. "They know us [and we are] building relationships

[around] what we have in common and honoring our differences."

She described students' experiences of navigating a city such as Mumbai and living with host families in Chinchoti as "mind-blowing." Last summer, Lincoln School introduced a Cuba-focused program.

Under Fogarty's leadership, Lincoln is blazing new trails: The STEAM Hub is Rhode Island's first dedicated STEAM space for girls; Lincoln and the Sophia Academy established Rhode Island's only all-girl Hackathon; and Lincoln reports that it is the only school in the Providence market to discontinue the AP program in lieu of robust interdisciplinary learning.

She's a leader who has learned to accept praise – which is important to model for Lincoln students – as well as constructive criticism. When students began making bumper stickers for the Women's March that said, "The Future is Female," she received student feedback asserting that "The Future is Feminist" was a more-inclusive message. "It's a complicated world. People have different interpreta-

tions of 'female' and 'feminist.' I've always been a feminist ... this was a great piece of feedback that I learned from," she said.

The changes "have been amazing; she operates on a whole different plane," said Bank Rhode Island Senior Vice President – Team Leader Tim Coggins, treasurer of the Lincoln School board of trustees. He commended Fogarty for implementing institutional partnerships, reinvigorating the Lower School, raising \$5 million for the STEAM Hub and reversing the enrollment decline that predated her arrival, all within four years. Enrollment has increased 15 percent in three years, he added.

"It's amazing how quickly she acts," said Coggins, who had served on the board's finance committee before Fogarty's tenure. "When she sees something that needs to be done ... it moves from a good idea to completion in a rapid period of time."

Fogarty's leadership extends to board service, including at the Sophia Academy (where she co-chaired the 2017 search for the school's head), the Association of Independent Schools of New England and RISE Women's Leadership Conference Advisory Board.

Asked about her plans for Lincoln's future, Fogarty said she aims to: grow partnerships the school has established with RISD, Brown, Bryant University and Save The Bay; remain true to the school's mission of social justice, diversity, inclusion and understanding; and prepare students to deal with the world's complexities with humor, confidence and resilience. ■

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