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# CLASS NOTES

NEWS FROM THE BALTIMORE CURRICULUM PROJECT AND BCP SCHOOLS  
 City Springs School - Collington Square School of the Arts - Hampstead Hill Academy - Wolfe Street Academy

## What is the Purpose of Public Education?

**Dolores Scott, Kindergarten Teacher  
 Collington Square School**

**What is the purpose of public education?**

The purpose of public education is to prepare students to become lifelong, productive citizens with a perception of self worth that will foster their inner being.

The purpose is to also provide a strong academic program that promotes the intellectual development and curiosity of each student.

Schools should in addition provide safe, secure, stimulating environments with a variety of experiences to enrich the lives of our students.

Finally, our job as educators must and should be to provide our students with the necessary tools to reach their highest potential.

**What do we want our children to learn in school?**

We want our children to learn that they have the ability and the potential to become whomever they want to be as long as they are willing to apply themselves and work towards the goal they choose.

We want them to learn that they are **SOMEBODY!!**

We want them to learn to respect themselves, then each other.

We must constantly remind them of how important they are to us, their family, neighborhood and world at large.

We want them to learn to use their talents and gifts they have been given in a positive way. They must first learn what the gift is and that we are all

gifted in one way or another.

**How can public schools prepare our children to participate responsibly and actively in democracy?**

We start by letting children know that they are valued and that what they say is important and we respect them as individuals.

We lead by example, then we can work on the how you say it part with them.

We cannot expect them to participate responsibly and actively without first seeing some role models in action.

Many of our children will not have the opportunity to witness this elsewhere. We are the hope for their future.

Role plays of various scenes/skits should be played out in the classroom, so that students have the chance to discuss how various situations should be handled.

We must provide a warm, accepting, democratic atmosphere whereby children can learn by discovery, inquiry, and reflective thinking.

**Ava Anderson, 7th Grade Student  
 Hampstead Hill Academy**

**What is the purpose of public education?**

I think the purpose of public education is to give every child a chance to learn everything that they need to learn in school to be prepared for college and their career. Like I am currently doing.

Also parents don't have to pay money for children to get the good education they need. Public schools can help children grow in the



Dolores Scott received The National Right to Read Foundation's 2005 Patrick Groff Teacher of the Year Award.

classroom and outside of the classroom through the information they learn.

Public education also helps children from other countries to get a good education because they may not be able to afford private schools.

I love going to public school because I can be confident that I am learning everything I need to know by the grades I am receiving.

**What do we want our children to learn in school?**

I think from a student point of view what I would like to learn personally is what I need to do to get prepared for high school, college and the life ahead of me.

Currently, as a 7th grade student at Hampstead Hill Academy, the subjects I am learning about are math, science, language arts and social studies. I know this will help me learn what I need to know for high school.

I also have resources that are fun, but I learn the most in my Food for Life  
 (Continued on page 7)

## Welcome from Executive Director Jack J. Pannell, Jr.

I'm very pleased to be writing as the Executive Director of the Baltimore Curriculum Project. Since assuming this position in June, I am inspired daily by the tireless work done on behalf of children and families in East Baltimore.

Since June, we have undergone a few staff changes and opened the school year with full capacity kindergarten classes at all of our schools.

We also welcomed new teachers and instructors to the BCP family and one new principal, Etta Johnson at Collington Square.

In mid-October, BCP hosted the inaugural Fall Assembly at City

Springs. We began a new tradition where the combined faculties of BCP schools met (over 250 teachers and instructors) for professional development workshops and an uplifting, one-hour program celebrating our theme: "The Joy of Teaching."

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises, the Chief Academic Officer for Baltimore City Public Schools, was our keynote speaker, urging us to prepare our students for leadership in all walks of life.

Delores Scott, a kindergarten teacher at Collington Square School, offered a personal reflection that was touching, honest and uplifting.

We also heard a reflection from

Jon McGill, BCP's Director of Academic Affairs, on the work of our instructors as teachers and learners.

The program concluded with a rousing roll call of teachers, based on years of service.

Continuing this new tradition in January, we are looking forward to the Winter Assembly on January 24 and 25 at Hampstead Hill Academy with a theme of "Raising the Bar: Rigor at All Levels."

Again, we hope to have a keynote address by a respected educator and informative professional development workshops.

## David L. Holder Education Foundation

The David L. Holder Education Foundation has awarded BCP a grant of \$10,000 to fund the Patterson Park Inter-School Soccer League for the Fall of 2011.

The league includes City Springs School, Collington Square

School, Hampstead Hill Academy, Patterson Park Public Charter School, and Wolfe Street Academy and serves students in grades two through five. The program is supported this year by two \$5,000 Ravens All Community Team Foundation grants.

Last year the Holder Foundation awarded BCP an \$8,000 grant to

support the Hampstead Hill Hornets Girls Soccer Team, Boys Basketball Program, and an outdoor leadership experience at Genesee Valley Outdoor Learning Center.

We would like to thank the David L. Holder Education Foundation for their generous ongoing support. <http://davidholderfoundation.org/>

## Jean and Sidney Silber Foundation

The Jean and Sidney Silber Foundation has awarded BCP a grant of \$10,000 to support Saturday School at City Springs School and Collington Square School.

These schools have made incredible gains in recent years and these additional hours of instruction will accelerate student progress.

Last year the foundation awarded BCP a grant of \$7,500 to support Hampstead Hill Academy's 2010 summer program. The program

served 85 children in kindergarten through fourth grade. Students participated in a variety of enrichment activities including singing, instrumental music, art, sports, nutrition education, and literature.

Students also participated in two Audubon half-day field trips in Patterson Park.

We would like to thank the Jean and Sidney Silber Foundation for their generosity and ongoing support.

## WOLFE STREET ACADEMY NEWS

### Wolfe Street Students Save the Bay

By Maura Farrall, Fourth Grade Teacher, Wolfe Street Academy

Wolfe Street Academy students and staff and volunteers from Accenture came together on October 11, 2010 to begin six projects critical to the health of Baltimore City and the Chesapeake Bay.

The projects were an introduction to a year-long environmental focus for each class. Each activity addressed a real need in the community.

Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten classes learned about recycling in our schools and homes. The classes listened to books, participated in recycling games and decorated paper grocery bags for customers of Whole Foods.

The first and second grade students learned about Nobel Peace Prize Winner Wangari Maathai, founder of the Greenbelt Movement.

The Greenbelt Movement began

with a single woman replanting the trees of Kenya after the government had cleared thousands of acres of forest to plant cash crops.

The students learned about the importance of trees and planted seeds to begin a nursery of trees to be planted locally.

The third grade students painted trash cans with images of wildlife. They read books about landfills and worked to bring attention to the wildlife and land being destroyed by the increasing number of landfills.

The class will work to inform classmates and the community about what should be in the garbage and what should be recycled.

The fourth grade focused on care for the local wildlife by making bird feeders and planting milkweed to create a Monarch Butterfly Garden in the spring.

Fifth Grade students are helping design and paint a new Bay-themed Pre-Kindergarten play area. The animals in the design are modeled after Chesapeake Bay animals.

The environmental studies program at Wolfe Street Academy is intended to not only inform students about issues in their community, but to empower them to be part of a solution.

We'd like to thank fourth grade teacher Maura Farrall for founding and running the program; Connie Phelps for coordinating with our community partners; and Michael Sferlazza and Anna Kirkness for assisting with preparations for the day.



### Class Notes

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BCP's mission is to develop, successfully implement and spread an innovative, sustainable, and replicable model of educational reform that will improve student outcomes while effecting systemic change.

In doing so, the Baltimore Curriculum Project will raise the educational standards and possibilities for disadvantaged youth, Baltimore City schools and the Baltimore City school system alike.

### The Purpose of Public Education *(continued from page 1)*

resource. I learn about healthy eating, different cultures and their foods. I play soccer too.

**How can public schools prepare our children to participate responsibly and actively in democracy?**

What I think public schools can do to help children in public school participate in a democracy is to have teachers teach students about democracy in school. Having workshops about democracy that teach students in an educational way but also include fun

like school elections and student council government.

Making sure that children understand Democracy before they complete their school education helps them become responsible citizens in America.

### The Importance of School Leadership *(continued from page 3)*

start to get us thinking about what good leaders do and say.

How leadership operates, how we train for leadership and how to step in when leadership goes awry are all critical areas of inquiry for school development.

The most recent educational controversies seem to focus on teachers and their competence, but one aspect of teaching that gets overlooked is that it thrives when leaders are strong, creative and dynamic, helping teachers set goals, supporting their instruction and

providing professional development.

Positive leaders always help create positive school culture, an indispensable foundation for successful schools.

This has been true of some of our greatest public servants, including too many Presidents to mention.

# HAMPSTEAD HILL ACADEMY NEWS

Articles by Geri Swann, Director of Community Outreach, Hampstead Hill Academy

## New Film, Cafeteria Man, Features HHA Students



Hampstead Hill's commitment to healthy eating is well known. For more than five years, the school has had a food educator, organic garden, culinary arts club and community dinners.

Now, Hampstead Hill is being highlighted in a new film called *Cafeteria Man*, by Richard Chisholm.

The film follows Baltimore's Food Services Director Tony Geraci on his quest to

HHA Culinary Arts Club serves hors d'oeuvres at the Creative Alliance during a "Cafeteria Man" screening on 9/18/2010.

make school lunches healthier.

A preview of the film was shown at the Creative Alliance last month, followed by a panel discussion that included Hampstead Hill Principal Matt Hornbeck and Hampstead Hill Food Educator Chrissa Carlson.

Ms. Carlson and her students are featured prominently throughout the film. *Cafeteria Man* is in final production and is being submitted to premiere at the Sundance Festival in Utah. Check to see if you recognize any of the people in the clip at: <http://cafeteriaman.com/>

## HHA Leads the Way in Vision Screening

Making sure your child can see the page and the board is a critical part of being ready for school. A study released last month by the Abell Foundation found that students in Baltimore City with vision problems are not being effectively identified, tracked and helped.

However, the study pointed to Hampstead Hill Academy as the shining example of how to do it right. For years, Hampstead Hill has partnered with the Maryland Society for Sight to provide vision screening for students in key grades not screened by the Baltimore City Health Department.

In addition,

THE ABELL FOUNDATION

the school's full time R.N. can conduct on-site screening.

Hampstead Hill is more consistent about following up with students who may need glasses and the school has a fund to provide glasses for students when their families cannot afford to purchase glasses. Read the full Abell report at: <http://www.abell.org/pubsitems/arn910jn.pdf>



## Hampstead Hill Hosts CUBE Site Visit

The Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) held their national conference in Baltimore City last month. Hampstead Hill was one of just two high performing schools highlighted during site visits for participants.

School board members from around the country and Baltimore were impressed with the teaching and learning at Hampstead Hill. They were especially impressed with the Food for Life classes.

We congratulate the Baltimore Board of School Commissioners for receiving the CUBE Annual Award for Urban Board Excellence.

## Bryn Mawr Students Visit HHA

On Thursday, September 23rd eleven students from the Bryn Mawr School spent their morning doing community service at Hampstead Hill Academy.

The students were placed in the pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade classrooms. They assisted the teachers in the classrooms by helping the students while working independently and doing special activities when the students completed their work.

The Bryn Mawr students expressed their delight in being a part of our school for a day and would like to take part in future projects.



Bryn Mawr students visit with boys and girls in Mrs. Gerrish and Mrs. Ross' room.

## The Importance of School Leadership

By Jon McGill, BCP Director of Academic Affairs

On one hand, we should be grateful for the national attention being paid to education now and over the last few months. On the other hand, we might wish that the focus was more expansive and perhaps a little more prescriptive in specific areas.

For many decades, at least since the launch of Sputnik in 1957, an event that really triggered the national hand-wringing about our education system, we have bemoaned our failing schools, our falling status amongst global competitors and our flimsy efforts to reform and rebuild.

Perhaps what we need to do is focus on what we know to be true and relatively timeless as a factor in school success: that demonstrative instructional leadership is crucial.

With good leadership, especially at the Principal level, so many challenges seem easier to meet, so many successes are magnified and so many more are created.

What, then, are the major components of good leadership, especially as it applies to urban schools, the institutions so often threatened by deprivation, disadvantage and disdain?

The lengthy lists often produced in answer to the question "what should a good leader be like" are often unrealistic and could be found only in what one colleague once called "God on a good day".

Rather than provide such a lengthy listing, we might be better off exploring the traits and qualities without which leadership is likely to be impossible.

This allows us to understand and accept that a great school leader may not have all of the "top twenty" traits that idealism creates but have enough of the indispensable traits so that he or she can clearly lead and command respect.

For example, in job descriptions and "leadership qualities" lists that often appear in advertisements, the word "organized" appears. I have had experience with fabulous school leaders who are organizationally challenged to say the least: that's why we provide them with support.

So why not boil down our traits and qualities to a manageable list and see what emerges? Almost all of the research on school leadership makes a distinction between leadership and management. It is possible to have one without the other and many school leaders would confirm that the managerial aspects frequently undercut leadership for change.

Ideally, a strong school leader knows how to manage or, even better, knows how to delegate many of the management tasks. It is the leadership piece that is critical. (For an overview of how leadership, rather than management, can have an impact on teaching, see Howard Gardner's 2004, book, *Changing Minds*.)

Here are the indispensable traits as I see them:

**Empathy**, especially with students and teachers. Gone are the days when authoritarian school leaders could have their way by mere command. Now it's about negotiation, compromise and ability to weigh all perspectives;

**Decisiveness** once the perspectives are understood, decision making and decisiveness (not the same thing) kick in and are vital;

**Wisdom**: this is much more than mere intelligence, which is relatively commonplace. Wisdom is rare but is absolutely crucial for the leader who wants to do more than simply "manage" the people in her/his school. Wisdom is what enables leaders to promote healthy change while still keeping nearly everyone on board.

**Ability to speak the truth**: not everyone should be on board. The ideal leader knows how and when to begin to cut ties with those who undermine or are otherwise not committed to the mission. He/she does so while maintaining professionalism and dignity but also supporting those who may have to move on;

**Knowledgeable**: about education, about organizations, and about children and their parents. There is no substitute for this;

**Knows boundaries but pitches in**: the school leader needs some boundaries between him/her and the teachers, students and parents. However, the good leader is also able to work side by side with all constituencies, at bake sales, student activities, parent events; "getting your hands dirty" promotes morale!

**Is consistent and fair**: decisions should be transparent, reasoned and consistent;

**Open to argument**: good leaders can hear a well-argued opposition to some plan or strategy and where necessary, adjust in light of that;

**Visible but not ubiquitous**: people want and need to see the institutional leader regularly and often but not as a micro-manager. Being everywhere in order to gain information is wonderful; being everywhere to look over shoulders reflects lack of faith in the staff.

**Mission-driven**: this may be the most obvious difference between mere managers and school leaders. The ideal school leader is able to have everyone focus, all the time, on the mission. He/she displays it, repeats it, makes it open to discussion but seldom allows it to be out of sight and mind for long;

**Accessible**: not the same as visible. Visible leaders can restrict access. Knowing when to provide access and to whom is very important.

This could be an even longer list but it may be a fair

# CITY SPRINGS SCHOOL NEWS

## “Truancy Court” Helps Students Get to School on Time

City Springs students with attendance issues are getting a helping hand through the Truancy Court Program (TCP).

Don't let the name fool you. The TCP is not about judgment and punishment. It's about helping students develop plans to reduce absences and reward excellent attendance.

The TCP, established in 2005 by the Center for Families, Children and the Courts (CFCC) at the University of Baltimore School of Law, targets “soft truancy” - students who have between five and twenty unexcused absences per semester, but retain academic, social and emotional connections to school.

The TCP addresses the root causes of truant behavior and links families to needed social services or other community-based supports. School Social Worker Joan Parker helps coordinate the program at City Springs.

“Ms. Parker has been very instrumental in bringing the TCP to City Springs and devotes a lot of time working with the TCP staff to ensure the success of the program,” said City Springs Principal Rhonda Richetta.

The voluntary program consists of 10 weekly in-school meetings among the student, the child's parent or care-

giver, a judge or master who volunteers his/her time, a mentor, a University of Baltimore law student enrolled in the CFCC Student Fellows Program, and a CFCC supervisor.

“The purpose of the Truancy Court Program is to help to find solutions,” said Maryland Assistant Public Defender Mark Friedenthal. Last year Mr. Friedenthal served as TCP judge at City Springs and Winston Middle School.

Interventions include parenting classes, tutoring, training in basic skills, counseling and anger management.

“Truancy Court is not as effective with elementary school kids unless the parents are involved, because so many circumstances that prevent kids from being on time are out of the child's control,” said Mark Friedenthal.

In some cases students may be responsible for getting themselves or their younger siblings ready for school while the parent works the night shift.

### Positive Strategies

The TCP is focused on positive reinforcement and interventions. Students who oversleep receive free alarm clocks. Students who make progress receive incentives, such as books or McDonald's coupons.

The program also rewards students with Family Fun Nights, a festive TCP graduation and, last year, a dinner at the Governor's mansion.

In some cases a student may avoid school because of a “mean” teacher who penalizes misbehavior by taking away class incentive points or excluding the student from a field trip. TCP staff members work with teachers to find alternative strategies that do not act as a disincentive to attendance.

The TCP started with four Baltimore City Public Schools in 2005 and has expanded to include fourteen Maryland schools (eight in Baltimore City, two in Anne Arundel County, two in Montgomery County, and two in Baltimore County).

Initial data indicate an overall 75 percent decrease in absences for students during and immediately following their TCP participation.

We would like to thank Mark Friedenthal, Jessica Stowell, Rodney Harrison, Juvenile Court Master Dawn Jones, Erica Levy, Renee McElroy, Joan Parker, Joyce Ryals, and Krista Wible for making the program at City Springs a success. For more information visit: <http://tinyurl.com/truancycourt>

by the National Science Foundation.

The program included science activities at several Living Classrooms sites including the Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center and USS Constellation Museum.

City Springs Science teachers had the opportunity to observe hands-on science activities and learn techniques for integrating science into the curriculum.

We would like to thank Living Classrooms Foundation and the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation for their support.

## Living Classrooms Supports After-School Math Program and STEM

During the 2009-2010 school year a grant from Living Classrooms Foundation supported an after-school math program at City Springs School, which had a remarkable impact on student achievement.

The program served thirty seventh and eighth graders from 3:30-5:00pm and seventeen fifth through eighth graders from 5:00-6:15pm.

Students developed and mastered math skills through MATHWORKS, a math curriculum developed by Linda Eberhart, Executive Director for the Baltimore City Public Schools Office

of Teaching and Learning.

Math scores on the 2010 Maryland School Assessment (MSA) increased substantially across all grade levels.

Math scores increased by 25.2 percentage points for grade five, 12 percentage points for grade six, and 35.3 percentage points for grade seven.

### Living Classrooms STEM Program

In June 2010 fifty City Springs students and their science teachers participated in a full-day, two-week Living Classrooms STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math) program funded

# COLLINGTON SQUARE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS NEWS

## Etta Johnson New Principal at Collington Square School

In August 2010 Etta Johnson began serving as the new principal of Collington Square School. Mrs. Johnson has worked for Baltimore City Public Schools since 1995.

She began her career as a substitute teacher. In 1998 she became a full time special educator at Benjamin Franklin Junior High School where she taught Math for grades six through eight, Algebra I, Biology, Corrective Reading, Social Studies, and Science.

At Benjamin Franklin Mrs. Johnson served on the School Improvement Team and chaired the data analysis committee. She then became the Instructional Support Teacher for Mathematics.

From Benjamin Franklin she moved to Northeast Middle School where she served as one of the

assistant principals.

During the last two years Mrs. Johnson was responsible for sixth grade. Using data to drive instruction, she helped the sixth grade attain significant gains in Math on the MSA.

“My motto for education is: every child is just like my own,” said Mrs. Johnson.

“I would not want any less for your child than I would want for my own.”

In addition to serving as a Baltimore City teacher she has also served as a teacher and mentor at her church.

Mrs. Johnson served on the Carroll County Day Care Centers Board of Directors and helped to establish policies to move the day care to better serve the students and



parents of Carroll County.

She also serves on the Board of Directors for Possibility Place Christians Ministries and conducts workshops that help to improve spiritual growth.

“At Collington Square School we are preparing our students to be leaders,” said Mrs. Johnson.

## Collington Square's Fall Family Festival 2010

By Kimberly Goldsmith, BCP Financial Analyst

Collington Square School for the Arts hosted their Annual Fall Family Festival on Thursday November 3, 2010.

The Festival consisted of various student performances and a collection of parent workshops, preceded by a nice dinner.

The primary focus of the event was to further engage parents in their children's education.

Last spring, Collington hosted a family fun festival for the middle grades, which prompted staff and Elev8 Family Advocate Ron Triplett to initiate more parent involvement activities.

Parents could choose from four workshops.

*I Can't Wait to Get out of Here* focused on supporting children through the middle grades and gave tips to help parents choose the right high school for their children.

Collington's staff has been diligent with bullying prevention awareness for the students.

*Bullying Prevention for Parents* was a follow-up from the children's classes to give parents a better idea of what is going on in the schools. The workshop taught parents how to prevent and handle bullying situations their children might

encounter.

*We Want an A: Helping Your Child Succeed in Math/Reading and Understanding the MSA's* gave tips on helping children with homework in reading and math; preparing for tests and quizzes; and preparing for the MSA.

Moving forward, the goal of Collington Square is to have Family Nights once a month.

The plan is to engage parents in more activities, such as high school choice, stress management, adolescent development, and nutrition.