

The Baltimore Curriculum Project (BCP) manages four neighborhood charter schools in East Baltimore. Our mission is to develop, implement, and advocate for an innovative, sustainable, and replicable education model that improves student outcomes. In so doing, the Baltimore Curriculum Project will help to raise educational standards and opportunities for disadvantaged youth and Baltimore City schools.

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BCP Schools

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Collington Square School - baltimorecityschools.org/97
Hampstead Hill Academy - hha47.org
Wolfe Street Academy - baltimorecityschools.org/23

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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?



Andrés A. Alonso, Ed.D.
CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools

What is the purpose of a public education?

The purpose of education, the nineteenth century Cuban poet and revolutionary Jose Marti once said, is to free.

If you had grown up in a small town in Cuba, like I did in the nineteen sixties, you couldn't escape

Marti, and the connection between education, literature and politics. Marti spent a relatively short period of his life in Cuba – he left at seventeen as a political exile, and only went back to Cuba to agitate and to die. But he left behind an extraordinary body of work that continually returned to a society's duty and need to educate its children (and its adults) in order for that society to function with justice. He spent a significant part of his adult life in the United States, writing poetry and children's literature as his avocation, but documenting as a profession the growth of a wondrous and, to his eyes, a sometimes monstrous young country, in dispatches that now occupy many volumes but appeared in newspapers all over Latin America. "I have seen the beast," he wrote, "and lived in its entrails." To know the entrails of American society, one needs to look at its urban schools.

In America today, schools reflect the social structure of society, and function to sort the political order in ways that replicate that social order. The richer the community, the more likely are the shiny and air-conditioned buildings, the highly qualified teachers, the gleaming science labs and instrumental music programs. The poorer the community, the more likely the physical neglect of the schools, the focus on remediation, the lamenting of massive dropout rates, and the complaints about unfair external pressures when we ask schools to show results. After the extraordinary aspiration of Brown, we have now de-facto re-segregated our urban schools. It is accepted as the way of the world.

Yet some schools succeed, and everywhere, for many children, we know that schools make an extraordinary difference. When we see schools succeed, we see places that respect the potential of the children and their parents, we see adults that unite professionally to compensate for many failures in how government works, we see a deep ethos of

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Mark R. Fetting
Chairman & CEO, Legg Mason, Inc.

What is the purpose of a public education?

Great societies are built on great educations. Because a great society is not a finished work, rather a challenge constantly renewed, the purpose of public education is to provide its students with the ability to both exercise and protect the

rights and responsibilities of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution within the context of the current time. The complementary ideas of democracy and public education are grounded in the immortal declaration "all men are created equal". Without equal access to a high-quality public education, democracy doesn't work. As Thurgood Marshall observed, "Education prepares individuals to be self-reliant and self-sufficient participants in society. Both facets of this observation are suggestive of the substantial relationship which education bears to the guarantees of our Constitution."

What do we want our children to learn?

We want our children to learn what it means to be a good citizen. A good citizen of a democracy inherently means a participant in a democracy. It means to live to the maximum of one's abilities, as part of a community because the Republic depends on our individual and collective wisdom, intelligence, strength, and work ethic. Technical proficiency in reading comprehension, quantitative studies, and communication techniques continue to be essential tools for living and working. Equally as important, however, is understanding the relation of a subject to the larger purpose of learning to live: how to respectfully engage on controversial issues; how to deal with ambiguity – how to live and work comfortably in the unknown. Our children also need to learn to question as W.E.B. DuBois suggested "not only what we believe, but what we do not believe; not only what our leaders say, but what the leaders of other groups and nations, and the leaders of other centuries have said."

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

Schools can prepare our children to be citizens by guiding them to engage on any issue facing their community. It

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The Charlesmead Foundation Awards BCP Grant to Support Summer Training

The Charlesmead Foundation has awarded the Baltimore Curriculum Project a generous grant of \$5,000 to support our summer 2011 CHAMPS Behavior Management Training for new and returning teachers.

This critical training provides teachers with the tools they need to create classroom environments that foster learning.

We would like to thank Lynn and Tony Deering for their interest in our schools.

CEO Andrés A. Alonso on the Purpose of Public Education (continued from page 1)

caring, and we see parents and volunteers that support a shared mission with the school, we see learning that is rich and deep and engaging, and we see the failure of every single child not as the failure of the kid or the reflection of outside forces, but as a salvageable tragedy that touches everyone. We recognize these schools when we talk to the children, and grasp that the quick enthusiasm and intelligence spilling in every small child when they first get to school is still burning with confidence and a love for knowledge as they get older. We have some schools like that in Baltimore. My job, and it's never for a second something that I see as Quixotic, is to make sure those schools succeed and multiply, and that other schools learn to be like them.

As the poet said, to educate is to free.

CEO Mark Fetting on the Purpose of Public Education (continued from page 1)

is not enough to study the philosophy of democracy; it must be learned through participation. Theory must be accompanied by engagement. It is through action we honor the precepts of the Constitution and serve the greater good.

Class Notes

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Muriel Berkeley, Ph.D.
President and Founder
Baltimore Curriculum Project

What is the purpose of public education?

The primary purpose of public education is to welcome the young as productive members of society. Public schools need to guide students to understand that we need them in

our communities and to understand how they can contribute to our communities.

The second purpose of public schools is to help students master the attitudes, skills and knowledge that will allow them to serve their communities.

Attitudes that will allow students serve their communities include:

- 1) caring about the welfare and rights of others,
- 2) understanding that hard work leads to success no matter how difficult the task, and
- 3) understanding the value of making mistakes (we typically learn more when we make mistakes than when we do everything right).

Skills that will allow students to serve their communities include:

- 1) reading,
- 2) writing,
- 3) arithmetic and mathematics,
- 4) speaking,
- 5) analysis,
- 6) critical thinking,
- 7) creating (drawing, sculpting, acting), and
- 8) physical skills (running, throwing, and climbing).

Knowledge that will allow students to serve their communities includes knowledge of:

- 1) geography,
- 2) science,
- 3) art,
- 4) history,
- 5) literature,
- 6) nutrition,
- 7) physical fitness,
- 8) health,
- 9) the interdependence of all living things, and
- 10) both the formal and informal ways that members of the community interact with each other.



WOLFE STREET ACADEMY Wolfe Street's Community School Initiative

By Connie Phelps, Community School Coordinator, Wolfe Street Academy

Recently I overheard a discussion among three of Wolfe Street Academy's (WSA) fifth grade students as they waited in line in the school cafeteria.

"I have to practice my violin tonight to be ready for class on Saturday" said Laura, a slim girl who squints constantly because she's too self-conscious to wear her glasses outside of class.

"I didn't like violin but I do the Mexican folkloric dance on Saturdays," Sandra replied.

She is tall and talks with the urgency of someone who expects to get cut off.

"We need boys in the dance class, Mario, why don't you join?"

"No, I don't dance," said Mario.

"Mario's a chess person" said Sandra. He smiled at this acknowledgement.

"Yeah, I've been playing chess for like three years and I'm really good now. Don't even ask Alex about dance, he's the soccer king."

I caught my breath. The students were taking pride in, even defining themselves by, school clubs and activities that did not exist a few years ago.

Laura, Sandra and Mario were living proof of what studies already show: arts and sports opportunities increase students' self-confidence and their enjoyment of school.

The growth in enrichment activities at Wolfe Street Academy has correlated with rapidly rising test scores at the school, as well as dramatic improvements in enrollment, student retention and parental involvement.

However, while research has shown that out-of-school-time programming is beneficial to students in a high-poverty area where parents are frequently unable to subsidize these opportunities, many children go without them. This is where the Community School Initiative steps in.

As a Community School, Wolfe Street Academy develops partnerships

with businesses, non-profits, religious groups, foundations and universities to meet the needs of our students and their families.

Our staff, parents and other stakeholders identify the barriers to learning that are prevalent among students— including lack of access to dental and vision care, food insecurity at home, and the need for access to academic tutoring, sports and arts activities.

A child who is hungry or cannot see the board will fall behind in class, no matter how talented or well-prepared the teacher.

By partnering with outside entities that can help address these needs, the school builds a web of support around children and families that maximizes student potential and allows teachers to focus on academics.

Wolfe Street Academy has been a Community School since 2006 and is one of twenty in Baltimore funded by the Family League and Baltimore City.

The Social Work Community Outreach Service of the University of Maryland School of Social Work now oversees WSA's Community School program.

The following is an overview of WSA's major partnerships for the 2010-11 school year:

Johns Hopkins /WSA Workforce

Johns Hopkins volunteers tutor students, serve as science project mentors and run an after-school gardening club.

Maryland Food Bank / Department of Social Services/ Supper Program

To address issues of food scarcity in the home, we provide phone interpretation and case management services to help families apply for social services. We also maintain a school food bank. In the Spring of 2010 we began serving supper to 80 children through a federally sponsored program managed by The Family League of Baltimore City.

St. John's Church

St. John's has donated \$10,000 each year for the past four years to fund tutoring in science, math and reading for 90 children.

GBYO Bridges Program

Bridges provides 35 students with string instrument instruction and Sunday orchestra classes.

Playworks

Since 2007 Playworks has provided WSA students with play and physical activity after school, at recess, and throughout the day.

The Ravens ACT Foundation / Patterson Park Elementary Soccer League

The Ravens ACT Foundation has been a long-time supporter of the Soccer League. A \$10,000 grant from the David L. Holder Education Foundation will also fund the fall 2011 season.

Downtown Baltimore Family Alliance

For the third year in a row the DBFA "Holiday Adopt-A-Family" program provided over 110 families with toys, clothing and food.

University of Maryland Dental School

Dental students have provided dental screening, oral health education and care.

Goldseker Foundation

The WSA PTO has successfully matched a \$5,500 spring challenge grant from the Goldseker Foundation and the Downtown Baltimore Family Alliance, which will support the Bridges string instrument program.

Beth Tfiloh Dahan Community School

For four years Beth Tfiloh's Winter Clothing Drive has benefitted over 80 WSA families.

Fells Point Corner Theater

FPCT has hosted a 1st grade drama club; our annual student art show; and a 5th grade closing drama presentation.

Upper Fells Point Improvement Association

The community association that every school dreams of, UFPIA's involvement at WSA includes a teacher wish list program providing materials to the classrooms, volunteers to help with special projects and community representation on school committees.

Mexican Folkloric Dance Group

WSA's Folkloric Dance Group has celebrated Mexican culture under the tutelage of volunteer parent Zoila Flores.

BOOST After-School Program

The Family League provided funding for our after-school program, run by the Y of Central Maryland in conjunction with BCP.

To learn more about the national community schools initiative, visit:

www.communityschools.org

HAMPSTEAD HILL ACADEMY

Articles by Geri Swann, Director of Community Outreach, Hampstead Hill Academy
Read more Hampstead Hill Academy News at www.hha47.org



US Tennis and US Soccer Visit Hampstead Hill Academy

On June 13th, over 400 students from Hampstead Hill Academy enjoyed a taste of tennis and soccer at the school's annual *Afternoon in the Park* in Patterson Park. Staff and volunteers from the United States Tennis Association (USTA) and US Soccer Foundation showed up in force for this event.

Students participated in a variety of tennis drills that got them smiling and excited about the game. USTA's "10 and Under Tennis" initiative, using the QuickStart Tennis play format, uses balls that are easier to hit, smaller rackets, and smaller courts than adult tennis. All of this equals more fun and less frustration.

After participating in the tennis and soccer clinics students were given a nutrition lesson by staff from Johns Hopkins and a snack of fresh fruit.

This school year a partnership between USTA, Friends of Patterson Park, and the Baltimore Curriculum Project will bring tennis to all four BCP schools through physical education, after school clubs, and an intramural tennis league planned for spring 2012.

We would like to thank Marc Kantowitz (President, USTA Mid-Atlantic/Maryland), Lynn Gertzog (Tennis Service Representative, USTA Mid-Atlantic/Maryland), Geri Swann (Community Outreach Coordinator, Hampstead Hill Academy), Tim Almaguer (Executive Director, Friends of Patterson Park), Katie Long (Recreational/Program Coordinator, Friends of Patterson Park), and all of the USTA, US Soccer, and Johns Hopkins staff and volunteers for making this event possible.



Culinary Arts News

The Culinary Arts Club wrapped up a fabulous year with a series of three field trips to explore different aspects of the food business. First, the club visited Te Amo restaurant in Canton, where they toured the kitchen, plated appetizers and dined with the owners.

The following week brought a visit to Great Kids Farm, where students observed fresh produce growing in

the fields and sampled a variety of vegetables and herbs.

Finally, the club traveled to Huber's Farm, where they picked strawberries that were sold at Hampstead Hill Nights. The students learned a lot and had a great time interacting with fresh and healthy foods. Ms. Carlson and the Culinary Arts Club would like to thank all of the many volunteers who have supported the club this year by helping out during club meetings, field trips and community dinners.

Chrissa Carlson Honored as Lunch Box Hero



HHA Food Educator Chrissa Carlson

Hampstead Hill Food Educator Chrissa Carlson was honored as the July Hero on the Lunch Box, an online toolkit with Healthy Tools For All Schools.

"Chrissa is a true foodie with a passion for gardening and cooking that she shares with hundreds of young students on a daily basis," said Hampstead Hill Principal Matt Hornbeck.

Read the full article written by Matt Hornbeck at: <http://bit.ly/lbhero0711>

Hampstead Hill Wins 2011 Middle School Debate Championship

Katie Spriggs and Deboreah Ross placed first at the Baltimore City Debate Championships hosted by the Baltimore Urban Debate League. Katie and Deboraeh received special awards at the Debate Awards Banquet, held at Morgan State University. At the event, HHA came in 7th place for the debate season.

Congratulations to Si Lin and Kathy Le who were the #1 and #4 speakers for the entire school year in the Junior Varsity Division. Mr. Swann and Miss Adams are very proud of all of the debaters this season.



Students Learn from Experience at City Springs and Hampstead Hill

Last year teachers at City Springs School and Hampstead Hill Academy received an extra hand from the dedicated volunteers of Experience Corps. Founded in 1995, this national program engages people over 55 in meeting their communities' greatest challenges.

Experience Corps volunteers tutor and mentor elementary school students, help teachers in the classroom, and lead after-school enrichment activities.

"Experience Corps gives our kids an edge each day. We have a wonderful group of people who want to give back," said Matt Hornbeck, Principal at Hampstead Hill Academy.

"Our teachers report that Experience Corps members are helpful, friendly and contribute to a positive classroom culture. Hampstead Hill's students truly benefit from our partnership with Experience Corps."

Administered by Greater Homewood Community Corporation (GHCC), Experience Corps began in 1998 as a pilot project in 3 Baltimore public elementary schools. Under GHCC's oversight, Experience Corps has grown into the nation's flagship program, now serving twenty schools with over 300 volunteers. Each extensively-trained volunteer commits a minimum of 15 hours per week for the entire school year. A team of 15-20 adults is placed in each school.

Ms. Etta Thomas, an Experience Corps Team Leader at Hampstead Hill Academy, says that the most important thing she offers the teacher and the children is an "extra pair of eyes and hands in the classroom."

Ms. Thomas was so taken with the students at Hampstead Hill that she has been volunteering at the school over the summer.

"Experience Corps is a win-win for adults and young people," said Brandi Roberts, Experience Corps Director of Field Services.

"The program improves both the health of older adults and academic achievement for children."

The relationship between older adults and children is critical.

"Experience Corps volunteers teach basic social skills, etiquette, and cultural values by the way they interact with the kids," said Alta Morris, Experience

Corps Team Leader for City Springs School.

"These children are our future. We have to do all we can and never give up on them."

We would like to thank Experience Corps for supporting our teachers and enriching the lives of our students. For more information about Experience Corps visit: www.experiencecorps.org



THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON EDUCATION



Thursday, September 22, 2011, 4:00-7:00 pm
Loyola University Maryland
Register at <http://bcp.eventbrite.com>

How does poverty impact education?

How can schools mitigate this impact? Where do we go from here? In this era of high-stakes testing and blaming teachers for school failure, the detrimental effect of poverty on academic achievement has been largely ignored by many educational leaders.

Although poverty is not an excuse for school failure; there is no excuse for disregarding the barriers to learning associated with poverty.

Join us as we explore this issue with **Peter C. Murrell, Jr., Ph.D.** (Professor of Urban Education, Loyola University Maryland School of Education); **Jane Quinn** (Vice President and Director of National Center for Community Schools, Children's Aid Society); and **Heather B. Weiss, Ph.D.** (Founder and Director of the Harvard Family Research Project). **Marc Steiner**, host of The Marc Steiner Show on WEAA 88.9 FM, will moderate the discussion.

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CITY SPRINGS SCHOOL NEWS

Restorative Practices Builds Community at City Springs

If you visit City Springs School at any time of day there is order and a sense of calm. Students are respectful in the classroom, hallways, administrative offices and cafeteria. Restorative Practices (RP), a proactive approach to positive school-wide behavior support, has helped create a nurturing environment where students learn to communicate effectively and act responsibly. It wasn't always this way.

"Fourteen years ago, before BCP became involved, City Springs was extremely chaotic. Kids didn't stay in class or even in the building, but did as they pleased," said BCP President Muriel Berkeley. "When BCP came on board, students learned new rules; rewards were put in place for following the rules; and everything improved."

"Several years later, BCP staff realized that students behaved only if the adults were watching. Students hadn't internalized the behavior. Then we heard about RP: a way to teach kids how their actions affected their classroom, their school and their neighborhood."

In 2006 BCP implemented RP at City Springs School, Collington Square School and Hampstead Hill Academy with the support of a \$42,000 grant from the Open Society Institute Baltimore and two \$20,000 grants from the Goldsmith Family Foundation. The International Institute for Restorative Practices provided training for all teachers and administrators. That same year Tonya Featherson, BCP's Director of Restorative Practices, received an Open Society Institute Fellowship to assist with the RP implementation.

"When BCP brought RP training to City Springs School four years ago, many teachers were a bit skeptical about the impact this approach would have on student behavior" said City Springs Principal Rhonda Richetta.

"This relationship-based approach to behavior management seemed

almost too simple to address the school's challenges. To say we have experienced remarkable results is an understatement: in just one year, suspensions plummeted from 86 to 9!"

RP has been effective in the most extreme cases. One situation involved a middle school student, 'Rob,' who had mercilessly teased and harassed another middle school student, 'Carl,' for months.

One day Carl reached his limit and pushed Rob, who fell and hit his head. Rob was knocked unconscious for a short time and taken away in an ambulance. The school police officer took Carl away and forced him to spend a night in jail.



A restorative circle at City Springs © IRRP 2011

A few days later, the school held a restorative circle with Carl, Rob, their extremely angry parents and some school staff.

"I was nervous," said Dr. Berkeley. "But through the circle, the parents apologized to each other and came together in support of their two boys."

"Everything is about relationships and communication," said Ms. Richetta. The most compelling part of RP is that it leads to everyone walking away feeling heard and understood, as each participant collaboratively work toward a resolution, and "making things right". According to a current seventh grade girl and eighth grade boy, RP makes them feel safe and protected in a sometimes intimidating middle school environment.

"RP has transformed my school

into a place where 'tough' kids have learned to help each other identify the role they played in a conflict and how to make things right. It has created an environment where teaching and learning can happen every day," said Ms. Richetta.

Whole School Implementation

RP has been so effective at City Springs that last year Ms. Richetta decided to contract with IIRP to begin a two-year, Whole-School Implementation of RP. The program involves 11 Essential Elements, including affective statements, restorative questions, fair process, small impromptu conferences, proactive circles and responsive circles.

Each element provides concrete ways to change the culture of the school. Ms. Richetta suggests that as the elements are successfully instituted, the "process of communication and expectations become transparent, and vulnerability is transformed into improved relationships."

The Future

Under Ms. Richetta's leadership, City Springs has become a model RP school. Both she and Dr. Berkeley were featured speakers at IIRP's 2011 Summer Symposium.

"Our vision extends to bringing RP to Perkins Homes Public Housing, where many of our students live. We want to help create a Restorative neighborhood that encompasses and supports the school," said Ms. Richetta.

On June 5th City Springs School hosted a Restorative Circle Night at the Perkins Homes Recreation Center. Twenty community residents participated and it was "the talk" in one of the courts afterwards.

"I give credit to RP for inspiring comments from visitors to our school; they remark that they can feel something 'very special' happening at City Springs."

COLLINGTON SQUARE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Collington Square School: Beyond the School Day

As the school day at Collington Square School winds down, students look forward to a wide variety of exciting after-school programs and activities.

The Club at Collington Square

The Club is an academic and community arts-based after school and summer camp program for youth ages 6 - 14 living in the Collington Square neighborhood.

Established in 2001, The Club offers a safe space to over 30 elementary and middle school students after school and throughout the summer.

The Club's mission is to help shape strong, responsible, respectful, and successful youth through academic and arts programming.

The Club maintains a food and clothing bank for parents in need and serves as a resource to community members.

Through a multitude of visual and performing arts media, Club youth express, create, learn, and grow, with each project extending their academic knowledge and understanding.

Through a community-based approach to art and creative expression, The Club engages both youth and adults through our arts curriculum.

Each day they provide individualized homework help as well as small group tutoring in Math and Reading.

The Club provides summer employment opportunities for older youth who participated in the program throughout their middle school years.

Elev8 Baltimore

Elev8 Baltimore is an initiative working in East Baltimore to ensure that students in the middle grades (5-8) succeed in high school and in life.

Elev8 Baltimore provides out-of-school time opportunities; school-based health services; and resources, support and outreach for students and their

families.

Elev8 Baltimore also engages families and students so that they can be effective advocates for themselves and their communities, and works to change the policies and practices of schools, government agencies, community organizations and others to strengthen their focus on student success.

Each Elev8 Baltimore school has a site manager and a family advocate responsible for working with the principal, teachers, students, and the community.

Higher Achievement Program

Higher Achievement's rigorous after-school and summer academic program gives youth from at-risk communities an opportunity to succeed in middle school — and in life.

The year-round program features an After-School Academy that runs from October to May, which includes intensive mentoring in math and literature, and a six-week Summer Academy, where students are taught math, science, social studies, literature, and an elective.

The Summer Academy also includes an overnight college trip, the scholars' introduction to college life.

At the end of their 8th grade year, youth are supported in the application process for the most-selective high schools in their community.

Middle Grades Partnership

The Middle Grades Partnership offers academically promising Baltimore middle school students the opportunity to excel in the city's most challenging high schools by providing them with comprehensive summer and after-school learning opportunities.

The partnership is made up of 18 Baltimore area public

and independent schools.

Established in 2005, the Middle Grades Partnership teaches reading, writing and math skills for the 21st Century; offers individualized student support; and trains teachers to accurately assess and teach to students' strengths and abilities.

Garrison Forest School, City Springs School and Collington Square School have been partners in the program since 2007. Friends School and Hampstead Hill Academy have been partners in the program since 2005.

21st C. Community Learning Center

The 21st Century Community Learning Center is an after-school/summer program that helps students develop academic and social skills through tutoring, cultural enrichment, youth development, field trips, mentoring, and special programs.

Program Coordinator Letta Forrest said the program provides community services for the whole family and empowers community members to advocate for their children.

In addition to offering academic and cultural enrichment, the program addresses critical family needs such as shelter, food, clothing, and rent and utility assistance as these needs arise.

Thank you

We'd like to thank all of our partners for supporting our students.



Students in the Higher Achievement Program