



Head of School's Annual Report School Year 2006-2007 May 2, 2007

The year has seen many improvements and successes, beginning with a strong enrollment and a solid financial base. Staffing for new teaching positions was accomplished and the same administrative team took on the tasks of leadership in the principal positions, technology, development, business management, and admissions. A number of campus improvement projects have been completed, curricular changes have been implemented, faculty and staff development projects were undertaken, and communication was improved through a newly-designed website. In addition, community service projects were enlarged and given better definition, student leadership was strong across all grades, and most recently, college acceptances have been outstanding. Student achievement in a number of competitions reached high levels. Finally, the capital campaign project for a new Performing Arts Center has started through the creation of an Advisory Council Committee, and the PTO has again done an outstanding job in their many projects that bring our community together.

Of course there are challenges as well, and these are briefly outlined at the end of the report. As in my report of last year, these continue to be the need for a broadened base of financial support, improving technology and educational resources in general, and providing adequately for our most important resource, the faculty and staff.

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment has been maintained at a historic high that presently stands at 845 students and is likely to reach the same level in 2007/8. We believe that we should hold the capacity of the total school enrollment to around 850 students while aiming at a better distribution between the lower and the upper grades. The OECC and Elementary are now at capacity, in some cases somewhat over the desired level (this has been compensated with additional aides). The Middle/High School enrollment has increased in recent years to from 270 students in 2000 to now 330 students, a large increase, which we believe, also reflects the steady improvements made in the standards and offerings at secondary level. The task ahead is to manage this enrollment properly, including the procedures and priorities concerning applicants on waiting lists.

EDUCATION

Technology resources have been substantially improved and need continuous attention. Teachers are using technology more extensively, developing their own websites and using software programs in instruction. The internal network facilitates communication between teachers and between teachers and administrators. Smart boards are being used in many classrooms and this will be continued until all classes have this resource. Technology was the main theme of numerous professional development workshops.

Professional development opportunities have been increased, with a growing number of teachers attending workshops here in Puerto Rico, in the United States, and even other parts of the world. This is vital to teacher motivation and curricular innovation. In addition, a staff wellness program has been initiated this year by the business/personnel office.

Puerto Rican History has been integrated this year into the Elementary School curriculum and the Spanish department's teacher schedules were changed so that each teacher would teach the subject at one grade level, doing both regular and Spanish as a Second language. At secondary level, we completed an audit of all AP courses which reviewed the curricular and resource requirements of AP courses. The trend of growing student enrollment in honors and AP courses continues from previous years. Curricular integration has been worked on successfully at OECC level.

Student achievements have been numerous, ranging from extraordinary successes in mathematics and forensics competitions to college acceptances and recognitions as Presidential and National Hispanic Scholars as well as National Merit Scholarship recipients. Students have also demonstrated significant leadership in community service activities, both at elementary level and at Middle/High School level. The Elementary program shaped and supported by Ileana Shub and parent volunteers has been an especially vital addition to community service. Student organized activities such as the Invisible Children Project and the Oscar Night in support of the proposed new Performing Arts Center were visible signs of the strength and depth of student leadership.

This year's college and university acceptances are outstanding with acceptances at highly selective institutions such as Princeton, Brown, M.I.T., University of Pennsylvania, Johns Hopkins, Williams College, Haverford, Carnegie-Mellon to name but a few. Students also earned a very high number of merit-based scholarships.

In numerous other areas, notably also in our athletics program, we have seen larger participation and considerable success for many teams. Athletic Banquets for both mini athletes and the Middle/High School athletes are now an established part of the sports program.

PROJECTS

This year we have completed the new guardhouses, the playground facilities for both elementary and OECC children, and new surfaces for indoor and outdoor athletic facilities. Finally, the new elementary classrooms, which will also accommodate a new elementary computer lab, are now about to be occupied, with an elevator that provides access to all second-floor elementary classrooms. In addition we are in the early stages of the new Performing Arts Center project while beginning plans for an elementary building that will bring together better space for the elementary administration, music, a relocated infirmary, a purpose-built elementary science lab, and a Spanish resource center.

A special project this year is the initiation of a new Strategic Plan to cover the years 2007-2012. This has been begun with a workshop in March and will be followed up in specific area groups covering finance, facilities, curriculum, faculty and staff, and community. It involves a cross-section of faculty, staff and administrators, parents, students, and alumni. We will report in more detail on this after the summer break, but any parents interested in knowing more about it should contact the Head of School.

Finally, a project that has a history and tradition of considerable success is the school's scholarship program, which is annually supported through the Golf Tournament run by the development office. It involves a large group of student, faculty, and parent volunteers in a well-designed process that selects each year up to two fully funded students normally entering the school at 7th grade with a commitment for their support until graduation. Recently received foundation support has added to the endowment, which is approaching a value of \$1,000,000.00 (\$US one million).

CHALLENGES

We have begun the development of fundraising at Baldwin, with a focus on the capital campaign for the new Performing Arts Center. While in the early stage we are seeking key donors who will provide substantial leadership gifts, this project will ultimately need to involve our entire community of parents, alumni, and other friends of Baldwin. A culture of philanthropy needs to be established that will allow us to broaden our budgetary base and allow us to undertake projects without undue burdens being placed on tuition. In this area we need to establish benchmarks that relate us not only to competing schools here but to independent schools in the United States.

In previous annual reports I have expressed my concern about our ability to keep and attract the best possible staff. We have many excellent and loyal teachers who have served Baldwin well over the years, but attracting the best for new vacancies is increasingly difficult despite improvements in our salaries and benefits and the overall quality of our professional environment. Attracting teachers from the United States is difficult, to say the least, given the large gap in salaries. The result is teacher turnover, notably at Middle and High School level.

Baldwin has an excellent campus with basic resources and facilities well in place. However, as noted, an auditorium/theater as well as improved library resources and space are critical components we presently lack. Growing enrollment also calls for improvement in the cafeteria space, for arts instruction, and administrative space. The growth of facilities also brings with it the need to attend to campus management, maintenance and security with enhanced professional attention.

Finally, we still need to build a yet stronger sense of community that cuts across all sectors - students, faculty and staff, parents, alumni and the wider community. Too often the tasks for planning community events rest on too few shoulders, and important events like the Annual General Meeting are not well attended. A sense of common mission and care is one of the hallmarks of an excellent independent school.

I thank the Board of Directors, all my colleagues, and the students and parents for making this, another successful year. I look forward to the advancement and graduation events that are always treasured highlights as the year comes to a close.

Dr. Gunther Brandt
Head of School

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