

Letter from the Headmaster

Dear Parents, Caregivers, Students and Friends,

Parents, caregivers, students and teachers gathered last month at our back-to-school orientation meetings and introduced our school-wide goals for 2006-2007. We will:

1. Improve student artistic and academic achievement through better data assessment procedures, paying particular attention to issues of equity and access.
2. Expand interdisciplinary teaching and learning.

While it is difficult in such a forum to discuss the meaning of these goals, we hope that in classrooms, parent/caregiver meetings, board discussions, student advisory groups you are all engaging with your own examination of these statements. Our staff has finished writing their annual professional development plans that tie to these goals. I am impressed with the depth of thinking exhibited in their writing. I will focus here on some objectives behind the goals, beginning with the first.

Some teachers will write case studies of students who are both very successful in class and then less successful. Through these cases, they hope to better understand their way of teaching, classroom management, and the kind of assignments and assessments given. In these and other methods, teachers are engaged in a deep process of reflecting on their own teaching as they examine the ways their students learn (or don't). We will devote a great deal of faculty meeting time to discuss strategies that better engage student success. We will continue to celebrate those students who make honors grades and, at the same time, intensify our efforts to bring students who are earning Cs onto the honor roll. Further, we are deliberately using time in our advisory groups to listen carefully to our students as they explain to us and one another how to be successful in school. Many of our students are excellent mentors and motivators for one another. We hope that advisory becomes a place of deep connection and trust for all of our students.

Test scores have been the way that politicians and school districts traditionally measure student achievement and success. While we will not ignore test results on the high-stakes MCAS or college admission SAT (where we have a new schedule for SAT preparation), we are equally as interested in the number and kind of books that our students are reading. We are also paying more attention than ever to expanding our students' access to a broader range of colleges. Beyond that, we are investing in a part-time retention specialist to study how BAA alumni are doing in college and after college graduation. For the first time, we have also committed to taking all 9th graders on our annual college day trips. We feel the college conversation needs to begin earlier in high school.

We will continue to examine our results, or our data, from all of these initiatives in a number of different ways and we invite you to do the same.

As we discuss and implement our second goal, we are reminded of RICO—our habits of the graduate—refine, connect, invent and own. These are not linear ways of thinking or learning, but rather attitudes towards learning and creating that we want our students to embody. As students participate in artistic and academic classes, as well as advisory, we ask what these terms mean to them and also how RICO might help us better expand our interdisciplinary understanding. Many teachers are incorporating more than one discipline in their own content area. In math, for example, classroom activities involve principles of design in order to strengthen students' numeracy skills. Other teachers are exploring ways to use movement to better teach the math concepts of functions. In visual arts students will be encouraged to develop a strong understanding of humanities in order to better contextualize what they are learning. All 9th graders are taking engineering this year, which we hope will be the quintessential interdisciplinary experience since the subject matter lends itself to math, science, design, and communication. The entire staff will be taking a five-session graphic design course, thanks to support from the Barr Foundation. We hope that as we improve our understanding of the principles of design, we will become more effective teachers for our students. (*continued on page 2*)

Important Dates

Thursday, October 5

Open House 7:45 am
Parent Workshop

Monday, October 9

Columbus Day
NO SCHOOL

Wednesday, October 11

Parent/Caregiver Council
Meeting 6-7:30 pm

Friday, October 13

PSAT Clinic @ BAA 1-3 pm

Saturday, October 14

SATs @ designated locations
Test begins @ 8 am

October 17-18

7th Annual Pilot School
Conference

Tuesday, October 17

Senior Grant Paper Due
to Ms. Balliro by 5 pm
Junior Parent Night
6-7:30 pm, Assembly Hall

Saturday, October 21

PSATs @ BAA, 8 am-noon

Thursday, October 26

Senior Project Night
4-6 pm

Friday, October 27

BAA/Fenway College Fair
Fall Off the Wall Ball

Wednesday, November 1

Spanish Exhibitions

November 1-4

BAA Theatre Dept. presents:

Macbeth

Production times TBA

Saturday, November 4

SATs at designated locations
Test begins at 8 am

**Calendar events are
subject to change.
Please call to confirm
times and dates.*

(Letter from the Headmaster, cont. from page 1)

As you can tell, if you have been at BAA for a while, our goals do not radically shift from one year to the next. We rephrase, refocus and deepen our efforts. Last year we looked broadly at dominant ideologies and how they affect teaching and learning. This year, as we continue our efforts to become more purposeful with data, we will deepen that work. In particular, we will examine the academic and artistic outcomes of our boys of color. This does not mean that will ignore other students. Over the years we have become more aware of how uniquely this group has struggled in our school. As we continue to focus on interdisciplinary work, we may find the key to raising achievement for all of our students.

We hope our school-wide goals frame our work this year with all of you. As always, we invite your responses and involvement at BAA.

Warmly,

Headmaster

Welcome New Faculty!

Mr. Seth Bodie <i>Theatre</i>	Ms. Joanna Lawrence <i>Educational Interpreter</i>
Mr. Matt Clauhs <i>Music</i>	Mr. Alexander Ngoku <i>Science</i>
Ms. Jessica Fisher <i>Humanities</i>	Ms. Mara Sidmore <i>Theatre</i>
Ms. Debbie Froggatt <i>Librarian</i>	Mr. Danny Wilcox <i>Humanities and</i>
Ms. Angela Hudon <i>Educational Interpreter</i>	<i>Principal Residency Fellow</i>

Opening Day

On September 7th BAA welcomed 413 students, including 143 new students for the 2006-2007 school year at our opening day ceremony, held inside Fenway Park. Thanks to the Boston Red Sox and Sarah McKenna, Director of Fan and Neighborhood Services, for this unique opportunity to start our school year.

Our August graduates

Congratulations to Lionel Blaise Jr., Philip Michael Cadet, Besoni Cohen, Carl Dorest-Johnson, Shakora Kai Fernandez, Christopher William Kelleher, Richard Valentino Pina, Jermaine Carlton Tulloch for their work over the summer which allowed them to graduate in August, 2006. Mr Donnell Paterson gave the commencement address encouraging students to be creative and immerse themselves in their passion for learning and the arts.

Jermaine Tulloch was the RICO speaker. "Over the years I have refined myself from a hallway major, to a vocal major... I learned that working hard is not a day-to-day choice. Working hard must be something engraved in your life, so that it comes naturally."



Photo Credit: Helen Russell

August Graduation at BAA. L to R: Curriculum Coordinator Ms. Anne Clark, Lionel Blaise Jr., Philip Michael Cadet, Shakora Kai Fernandez, Co-Director Ms. Carmen Torres, Carl Dorest-Johnson, Jermaine Tulloch, William Kelleher, Besoni Cohen and Artistic Dean Ms. Fernadina Chan.

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Fall Off the Wall Ball

It's singing, it's dancing, it's a fashion show extraordinaire! Don't miss this year's Fall Off the Wall Ball. Sponsored by student government, it's a social event open to all BAA students. Come to the Ball—October 27. Ask your advisor for details.

Parents/Caregivers

Thanks to all of the parents/caregivers who attended the orientation. Again, this year we had a great turnout. Parent/Caregiver Council Board Elections were held and we had many volunteers for the various sub-committees.

Every parent/caregiver is a member of the Parent/Caregiver Council at BAA. It is a great opportunity to become involved with your child's school, meet other parent/caregivers and stay connected to the BAA community. The next meeting for the 2006-2007 school year will be held on October 11th from 6-7:30 pm in the Assembly Hall. Stop by to hear the election results and talk about the upcoming school year. As with any event, please call the main office to confirm, as schedules do change occasionally.

Please contact Lana Niles-Malcolm with any questions at 617-635-6470 x102.

A Sad Note

Abbie Schirmer, teacher and a founding member of Fenway High School passed away unexpectedly on August 23, 2006. We are saddened by the loss of our colleague and friend who was deeply loved by students and staff. Abbie was a tireless advocate for young people and for the kinds of schools that inspired and supported them. A memorial service was held at the Cambridge Friends Meeting House on September 30th.

Oaxacan Adventure



BAA students in traditional Mexican dress. From L to R: Addie Rutkowski, Melanie Cain, Jessica Perry-Lang, Nathan Stockwell, Alexia Rojas, Abby Caruso and Kiara Thomas. Seated in front: Daysi Melgar.

BAA at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival



Photo Credit: Ros Thomas-Clark

A More Perfect Union cast and crew at the Church Hill Theatre in Edinburgh, Scotland. Front Row, L to R: Kadahj Bennet, Tyshaunda Hasberry, Tina Do, Karla Heredia, Gianella Flores, Damean Hollis & Joseph Eveillard. Back Row, L to R: Michael Cognata, Mr. LaCount, Kaya Manselle, Ms. Varekamp & Eladio Banks.

Summer Studies at BAA

Summer programs and travel are an integral part of a Boston Arts Academy education. Students attended music camps, art programs and dance camps locally and across the country, worked at internships and deepened their academic skills. A total of 125 BAA kids attended a summer study program. We'd like to give special thanks to Mr. Daniel Rothenberg who so generously supports summer study opportunities for our students. Three travel experiences went above and beyond remarkable:

Oaxaca, Mexico. World Language teacher, Ms. Cara Livermore, Mr. George Simpson and 10 students had an intensive cultural experience traveling in Mexico, speaking Spanish, visiting schools, staying with local families and exchanging their arts culture with local people.

Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Ms. Ros Thomas Clark, Mr. Mark Buchanan, and Ms. Jennifer Varecamp worked as director, technical director and costumer respectively to stage BAA's *A More Perfect Union* with 10 students at this internationally acclaimed theatre event. Along with 35 other U.S. high schools, BAA students put up a shortened version of the play, written by Kirsten Greenidge. Students had an amazing 12 days of theatre, culture and international exchange.

Hollywood. Two students were hosted by Los Angeles writer Ed Redlich and his wife Sarah Timberman, an executive television producer. Vonski Celestin and Gradey Robinson spent two weeks as production assistants for the upcoming TV show *Shark*, learning firsthand what it really takes to put together a television sitcom from start to finish. We are immensely grate to Ed and his family for their personal and financial support of these young men.



Anne Clark **Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Finalist**

Anne Clark, Boston Arts Academy Curriculum Coordinator, was named a finalist for the 2006 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. Ms. Clark, a founding member of the BAA faculty, is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Harvard/Radcliffe College and a Mellon Foundation Fellow for the Humanities. She received her Master's in English and American Literature in 1993 and is A.B.D. in secondary literary theory and instruction, both from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Ms. Clark teaches Humanities and has been central in shaping the school's approach to teaching and learning, making it inclusive for all students. She is pursuing a certificate in Educational Leadership and Special Education. Congratulations to Ms. Clark for this prestigious honor.

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