

THS BEAR TRACKS



August 4, 2010 Volume 1

BACK TO SCHOOL AUGUST 18TH, 2010

It's school time again! Your child is probably feeling excited and maybe a little sad that summer is over. Some kids feel nervous or a little scared on the first day of school because of all the new things: new teachers, new friends, and maybe even a new school. Luckily, these "new" worries only stick around for a little while.

Most teachers kick off the school year by introducing themselves and talking about all the stuff students be doing that year. Some teachers give students a chance to tell something about themselves to the rest of the class. Teachers often go over classroom rules so that students know what's allowed and what's not.

Kids might already know a lot of people in their classes on the first day. But it's a great day to make a new friend, so try to teach your child how to make the first move and you'll be glad you did and so will your child's new friend!

Moving to Middle School?

Sixth grade often signals a move to middle school or junior high. In middle school you move from classroom to classroom for each subject. The teachers know that this is a big change from elementary school and will help the children adjust.

Most teachers let the kids pick their own seat on the first day, but by the second or third morning, they'll have mapped out a seating plan. Seeing friends your child hasn't seen in a while can make the first day a good one. At THS students wear a uniform, but they you might wear a favorite watch or piece of jewelry to show their personal style.

Help your child feel good to be prepared and have all the supplies they need. At middle school children need to learn how to be better prepared and organized. Whatever they put in their backpack, make sure they pack it the night before. This prevents the morning panic when they can't find their homework or lunch box.

Let's have a great year!

Labor Day is a glorious holiday because your child will be going back to school the next day. It would have been called Independence Day, but that name was already taken.

~Bill Dodds

The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows. ~Sydney J. Harris

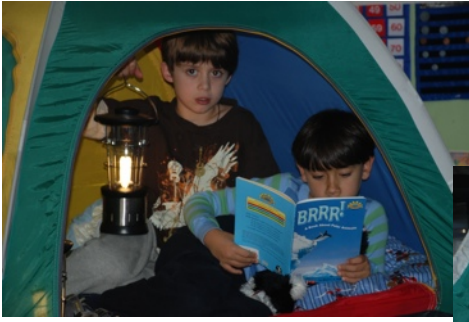
What we want is to see the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of the child.

~George Bernard Shaw



FIRST-GRADE SLEEP-OVER AT SCHOOL

“This was the best sleepover, ever”!



International Program Catches on in U.S. Schools - *New York Times June 2010*

CUMBERLAND, Me. — SAT, ACT, A.P. ... I.B.?

The alphabet soup of college admissions is getting more complicated as the International Baccalaureate, or I.B., grows in popularity as an alternative to the better-known Advanced Placement program.

The College Board's A.P. program, which offers a long menu of single-subject courses, is still by far the most common option for giving students a head start on college work, and a potential edge in admissions.

The lesser-known I.B., a two-year curriculum developed in the 1960s at an international school in Switzerland, first took hold in the United States in private schools. But it is now offered in more than 700 American high schools — more than 90 percent of them public schools — and almost 200 more have begun the long certification process.

Many parents, schools and students see the program as a rigorous and more internationally focused curriculum, and a way to impress college admissions officers.

To earn an I.B. diploma, students must devote their full junior and senior years to the program, which requires English and another language, math, science, social science and art, plus a course on theory of knowledge, a 4,000-word essay, oral presentations and community service.

Here in Cumberland, Greely High School adopted the I.B. this year to make students more aware of the world beyond the United States.

“When our grads would visit from college, they'd tell us that while Greely gave them great academic preparation, they'd had no idea there was a big wide world out there,” said David Galin, Greely's I.B. coordinator.

Many schools, and many parents, see the I.B. partly as a way to show college admissions offices that students have chosen a rigorous program, with tests graded by I.B. examiners around the world.

“I don't think there is anyone who does not respect the I.B.,” said Panetha Ott, an admissions officer at Brown.

Fewer colleges give credit for the I.B. than for A.P., but dozens give students with an I.B. diploma sophomore standing and some offer special scholarships.

At The Healdsburg School we believe that Students in the 21st century are faced with the challenge of learning about an interconnected world where knowledge is constantly developing. The International Baccalaureate® (IB) Primary Years Program prepares students to be active participants in a lifelong journey of learning.

The IB Primary Years Program, for students aged 3 to 12, focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.

Life in the 21st century places many changing demands on students making the transition through adolescence. They are at a crucial period of personal, social, physical and intellectual development, of uncertainty and of questioning. The International Baccalaureate® (IB) Middle Years Program is designed to help them find a sense of belonging in the ever-changing and increasingly interrelated world around them and to foster a positive attitude to learning.

The IB Middle Years Program, for students aged 11 to 16, provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, and become critical and reflective thinkers.

Computers at Home: Educational Hope vs. Teenage Reality

By RANDALL STROSS, NY Times July 9, 2010



MIDDLE SCHOOL students are champion time-wasters. And the personal computer may be the ultimate time-wasting appliance. Put the two together at home, without hovering supervision, and logic suggests that you won't witness a miraculous educational transformation.

Still, wherever there is a low-income household unboxing the family's very first personal computer, there is an automatic inclination to think of the machine in its most idealized form, as the Great Equalizer. In developing countries, computers are outfitted with grand educational hopes, like those that animate the One Laptop Per Child initiative. The same is true of computers that go to poor households in the United States. Economists are trying to measure a home computer's educational impact on schoolchildren in low-income households. Taking widely varying routes, they are arriving at similar conclusions: little or no educational benefit is found. Worse, computers seem to have further separated children in low-income households, whose test scores often decline after the machine arrives, from their more privileged counterparts.

Ofer Malamud, an assistant professor of economics at the University of Chicago, is the co-author of a study that investigated educational outcomes after low-income families received vouchers to help them buy computers.

"We found a negative effect on academic achievement," he said. "I was surprised, but as we presented our findings at various seminars, people in the audience said they weren't surprised, given their own experiences with their school-age children."

Professor Malamud and his collaborator, Cristian Pop-Eleches, an assistant professor of economics at Columbia University, did their field work in Romania in 2009, where the government invited low-income families to apply for vouchers worth 200 euros (then about \$300) that could be used for buying a home computer.

The program provided a control group: the families who applied but did not receive a voucher. They showed the same desire to own a machine, and their income was often only slightly above the cut-off point for the government program.

In a draft of an article that the Quarterly Journal of Economics will publish early next year, the professors report finding "strong evidence that children in households who won a voucher received significantly lower school grades in math, English and Romanian." The principal positive effect on the students was improved computer skills.

At that time, most Romanian households were not yet connected to the Internet. But few children whose families obtained computers said they used the machines for homework. What they were used for — daily — was playing games.

The state of Texas recently completed a four-year experiment in "technology immersion." The project spent \$20 million in federal money on laptops distributed to 21 middle schools whose students were permitted to take the machines home. Another 21 schools that did not receive funds for laptops were designated as control schools.

At the conclusion, a report prepared by the Texas Center for Educational Research tried to make the case that test scores in some academic subjects improved slightly at participating schools over those of the control schools. But the differences were mixed and included lower scores for writing among the students at schools "immersed" in technology.

THE one area where the students from lower-income families in the immersion program closed the gap with higher-income students was the same one identified in the Romanian study: computer skills.

How disappointing to read in the Texas study that "there was no evidence linking technology immersion with student self-directed learning or their general satisfaction with schoolwork."

When devising ways to beat school policing software, students showed an exemplary capacity for self-directed learning. Too bad that capacity didn't expand in academic directions, too.

Yosemite Living History Trip

The Fifth Grade at THS went to Yosemite to participate in the Environmental Living History Program in May 2010. We "became" John Muir, Galen Clark, Mother Fremont, and other settlers and natives of the Valley. We chopped wood and cooked on the wood burning stove (Yes, WE had to get it going without adult help! It took 50 minutes, but Max finally made it happen!).

We blacksmithed, learned to handle the wagon and horses, square danced, and slept in the log cabins.

We woke up at 5:30 to chop wood and prepare breakfast and then participated in a town hall meeting, debating how to manage the land we had discovered.

Should we build hotels?

Should we make more roads?

How would we preserve this beautiful place we had "discovered"?

After 24 hours of complete reenactment, we changed our clothes, grabbed some bicycles and off we went to discover the Valley that we had helped to settle. Watching the sun set on Half Dome, we tracked a deer!

Waking up in our tents, we left the sunny weather to be blessed by a little snow and had a snowball fight, the first for some of us! We watched a bear feeding in our last hours there and sang all the way home.

It was an amazing experience, with Fifth Graders gaining new perspectives on land management and conservation.

Amy Caldwell





The Lost Art of Debate

On October 16, 1854, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas debated in Peoria, Ill. Neither was a candidate for president at the time; it would be four years before they ran against each other for the U.S. Senate. But they were already debating the issues facing their state and their country.

It started at 2:00 p.m. and Mr. Douglas spoke for three hours. When it was Mr. Lincoln's turn, he said that he would need at least as much time to respond, and then Mr. Douglas would need time for his rebuttal. He proposed that everyone go home for dinner and come back for the rest of the debate. The audience—consisting of pretty much the whole community—agreed. After they came back, the debate went on for four more hours.

In 1858, the Lincoln–Douglas debates had a faster-paced format: Mr. Douglas would speak first, for an hour; then Mr. Lincoln would take an hour and a half to reply. Then Mr. Douglas would have a half-hour for a rebuttal.

By all accounts of the Lincoln–Douglas debates (a good one can be found in Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*), ordinary Americans—down to the lowliest farm boy—turned out as part of their participation in their own self-government. The crowd could get boisterous, with applause and catcalls, but they were able to follow complex, sophisticated discussions with rapt attention.

In contrast, in today's presidential debates, each candidate has two minutes to make his case, with rebuttals and answers measured in seconds instead of hours. The format never allows time to develop a coherent argument or to answer fully an opponent's charges. Both candidates know that image, not truth, is the real issue. How they come across—not what they say—is what really matters to the media and to the American public. To score points, they must avoid gaffes, score zingers, and, above all, seem presidential.

Pundits attempt the ultimate micro-poll in actually charting a focus group's reactions as the debate takes place. On a graph, we can see opinions rising with good lines and falling when the candidate "goes negative." After a recent vice-presidential debate, which actually did involve some high-level discussion of the issues, just about all the CNN focus group wanted to talk about was "Mr. Lieberman's smile," how relaxed and confident Mr. Cheney was. Above all, the focus group—representing a culture in which all ideas have to be seen as equally valid and in which the only moral absolute left is tolerance—appreciated how neither candidate was excessively "negative" about the other person.

The decline of the art of debate can also be seen in our schools.

At THS, starting this fall, we again offer the after school courses of Debate, or as the children call it “War with Words”. The 7th and 8th grade student will be able to participate in this exciting program that has proven to be very successful for many current and past THS’s students. It has been amazing to see shy, uninterested students become outspoken, articulate, and engaged. The kids have improved their organized writing, public speaking, researching, note-taking, extemporaneous speech and critical thinking skills. They do all their own research, come up with all their own arguments and counter-arguments and really dig into the issues.

8th grade homeroom teacher Mrs. Paulson will be working on the materials and concepts for this falls group of debaters.



Bravissimo 2011 is taking shape

Although the final venue and date have not been approved by the Board, the Bravissimo Planning Committee is in full swing to make this event another integral part of the schools fundraising efforts. Please look for details in next month Bear Tracks.

Here is a hint for the event....

Planing to take your sweetheart out for something special next Valentine's may be as easy checking out next month Bear Tracks newsletter!!!

Oh, and yes, we will have loads of red and white colors.

On Valentine's Day we think of those

Who make our lives worthwhile,

Those gracious, friendly people who

We think of with a smile.



To support this event in its early stages we will begin actively soliciting sponsorship of the event. This year we are focusing to concentrate our efforts on adding value for our sponsors. The sponsorship amounts have increased, but we will be making a point of making sure the school as well as the larger communities will be more exposed to the sponsors and that they are more prominently featured before, during and after the event.

The sponsorship tiers are as follows:

*\$3000 – **Grand Sponsor** = 4 tickets to the event, table signage, featured on all written materials.*

*\$2000 - **Mezzo Sponsor** = 2 tickets to the event, featured on all written materials*

*\$1000 – **Piccolo Sponsor** = 1 ticket to event, featured on all written materials*

*\$500 – **Friend** = featured on all written materials*

Our first sponsorships have already started to come in, and we are looking at another fabulous fundraiser for THS.

Due to our past very generous donors and sponsors, we at THS, have been able to maintain the mission of THS of providing an excellent academic education based on an ethically solid and modern 21st century curriculum taught by the best teachers in the Nation. We would like to continue offering these outstanding features that makes THS a great educational option in Sonoma.

Keep in mind that sponsorship of the event is fully tax-deductible for the amount in excess of the value of the tickets received. The plan currently is for tickets to be value at \$125 each. This may change slightly. Please consult your tax professional regarding your individual tax situation.

Please contact Bear Tracks to place your sponsorship now.



TEACHERS CORNER

Teacher Bio

Leigh Schmitt

Upper School Mathematics, Science and Economics

Leigh Schmitt is delighted to be joining The Healdsburg School as the new upper school mathematics, science and economics teacher. Leigh has been teaching for eleven years, and is in his fifth year of teaching math and science to students in grades 7-12 at The Academy at Charlemont in Charlemont, MA. In addition to teaching, Leigh has extensive experience coaching sports, serving as a student advisor, and "greening" institutions through his tireless passion for the environment. At his current school, Leigh helped to implement an extensive gardening and composting program, served as a faculty representative for a student-generated Sustainability Council, enlisted the institution in a nationwide energy conservation competition (The Green Cup Challenge), and co-created an interdisciplinary seventh grade course entitled "Climate Connections".

Despite his love of travel, Leigh has been a life-long resident of New England, so resettling his family in California will be a true adventure. His two children are true outdoor kids with boundless energy. Leigh is a graduate of Deerfield Academy, Union College, and the University of Massachusetts. For the past three summers, Leigh has been the recipient of three distinct, unique grant research opportunities. In 2007, Leigh snorkeled, restored coral reefs, and learned the values of experiential and place-based education at The Island School in Cape Eluthera, Bahamas. The following year, he collaborated with a colleague to create an environmentally-themed, interdisciplinary seventh grade curriculum. Most recently, he researched agricultural education and farm-to-school programs at high schools and colleges in the Northeast. In his free time, Leigh is a professional runner and serves as an athletic ambassador for the North Face and CLIF Bar Corporations. Leigh is currently ranked seventh in the nation in the sport of ultra running. Leigh cannot wait to hit the ground running in the Golden State with his wife and two children.



**Welcome to
The Healdsburg School!**

From the Board

Our next Free Friday BBQ at THS will be hosted again by the Board of Trustees. Please join us on August 27th between 3:00 -5:00pm in the school yard.

Let's have a nice welcome for our new THS Families!



Putting a Play Structure back in the "Cycle of Life"



What is a sad reality for some can turn into a fortunate stroke of luck for others.

In 2008 the closing of Gold Ridge School in Rohnert Park brought about mixed feelings and emotions into that community as well as a shot of reality about the States funding of education in California.

Last month, an enthusiastic group of parent volunteers, took a backhoe and comprehension jack onto their flatbed trucks and set out to give this wonderful structure a new lease on life. With so many helping hands the move was accomplished to everybody's satisfaction and the THS students have a new play structure to call their own.

Our thanks to Hans Dipple and the numerous volunteers who made this happen!



ADMISSIONS UPDATE



We are ecstatic to be welcoming families to our expanding community not only from Sonoma County but from Wisconsin, Illinois, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Washington and Southern California too!

Wednesday, August 18th

First Day of School

Please send inquiries in regards to Bear Tracks to bettina@thehealdsburgschool.org.

We'd love to hear from you!
