

THS BEAR TRACKS



October 9, 2011 Volume I

BACK TO SCHOOL

Welcome to the 2011-2012 school year, THS's fifth anniversary!

The School year has commenced and we would like to take the opportunity to welcome all 152 students and their families to THS!

We have no doubt that our students will throw themselves into their education, they will make the most of the canvas of opportunity that they are offered, and they will paint the goals to which they aspire. We have no doubt that if they remain motivated in the classroom, then they will achieve success. Their education is sound, creative and innovative, and THS, together with the parents and the students themselves, will help to make their goals a reality.

In its 5th year of operating, THS has grown from a 7th & 8th grade school with 16 students total, to a full size K-8th grade school with an attendance of 152 students. It is a testament to the academic vision of our Head of School and Founder Sandi Passalacqua, the dedication of our faculty and staff, and the power of collaboration of our families, that we have grown into an education powerhouse.

Let's keep up the good work!

The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows.

~Sydney J. Harris





FAMILY PICNIC AT LAKE SONOMA

With the school year just barely out of the starting blocks, the annual picnic offered a great opportunity for old and new Families, Teachers and Staff, Friends and Alumni, to get together to form and rekindle friendships.

Our thank you to the THS PTO for serving up several hundred hot dogs and hamburgers. We are off to a great start!

Read the weekly newsletter announcing upcoming social events and important messages by the PTO.

PTO PARENT/TEACHER SOCIAL

Our thanks to Daryl and Lisa Groom who, once again, hosted the first Parent Social of this school year.

These events raise money for the PTO, are a great way to meet the parents of your Child's/children's friends, and are quite simply a whole lot of fun.

On October 15th, Matt Shippey and Carin Case are graciously opening their home for the second scheduled social; sure to be another sell-out crowd!



GRANDPARENT AND SPECIAL PERSON DAY

In the years since Jimmy Carter first declared Grandparents Day a national holiday in 1978, the nation has been following his call to reflect on the impact grandparents have on our own lives — and on society. The support of loved ones provide the earliest and most powerful influence on our lives. Grandparents hold a special place in our families, serving as elders, and sources of lasting inspiration. Many adults who are not grandparents but Special Persons in children’s lives, provide inspiration and caring, are also invited by our students to share this day.

On October 10th, THS honors the loving presence of these mentors who have contributed immeasurably to the strength of our families and the THS Community.



THS ALUMNI FOUNDATION

In the five years since the founding of THS, we have graduated 40 students. They all have been admitted to the THS Alumni Foundation and provide constant feedback and update in regards to their current status in high school. 2012 will be an exciting year for THS because our first graduating class will have finished high school and are on their way to college. We wish them all good luck and can’t wait to hear back what college and universities they have selected.

As of today we can announce that 100% of the high school class of 2012 is committed to follow their path in education into a four year college. GO CLASS OF 2012!



THS Produce Market

Generous produce donations and volunteer support committed to holding the first THS Produce Market resulted in proceeds totaling \$1300. We had a wonderfully successful afternoon and this effort brings us one step closer to allow all students to travel to Washington, D.C. next spring!



The International Baccalaureate Program - IB

THS is excited to announce that we have met the initial requirements of the International Baccalaureate Organization and have been accepted as a candidate school for the Primary Years Program, as we pursue authorization as an IB World School.

The American Baccalaureate, Creating Inquiring Minds - Teri Szucs, 10/2110

“Before we can strive for excellence in education, we need to first achieve parity in its quality. Today, an American High School diploma is two years behind the International Baccalaureate and its European counterparts. The IB focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside, and becoming a critical and reflective thinker.

It is time for an American International Baccalaureate equivalent, not just to raise expectations, but to demand them.

The core of the curriculum is math, not just as a subject, but as the fundamental path to analytical thinking. The teaching method is "math inquiry", a philosophy of teaching where children explore mathematical concepts and construct their own solutions. The primary goal is not to achieve proficiency in Calculus II, but to gain a full comprehension of logical, critical and creative thinking with a holistic and concurrent teaching of all branches of mathematics, including analysis, algebra, geometry, discrete math and logic. The sectional way in which math is taught today is counterintuitive, and the cause for the apprehension so many children feel towards the subject. Imagine learning a language this way; one year you learn vocabulary, just a long string of words, next year you learn grammar, and so on, years later you will not be able to think or to fluidly express yourself in the language. The same is true of mathematics.



That same principle is then applied to the teaching of all disciplines; grammatical analysis is taught in a language class, history is taught with an emphasis on cause and consequence, cycles, and political perspective.

Learning a second or third language also contributes greatly to the development of conceptual thinking and creativity. As a professional interpreter, I know that no two words are exact equivalents; each word is a unique concept, each language has a unique perspective. The aim, once again, is to broaden the child's mind and curiosity.

The goal is to teach a child to learn, to connect the dots, to convert data into information, and information into knowledge. Life will bombard children with information, the ability to thread relevant facts together and to separate what is logical from what is not will set them on their respective paths as life long learners and independent thinkers. They will excel, not just because of the knowledge they accumulated in school, but because learning itself was the lesson learned -- like a bookshelf yearning to be filled. Teaching concepts instead of raw data will make all future learning a natural process of assimilation, not memorization. We are only in school for a few hours during a few years; the rest of our knowledge will be acquired throughout our lives. Being able to separate the illogical from the logical, recognizing cause and effect and threading information together is the most important thing a school can teach a student”.

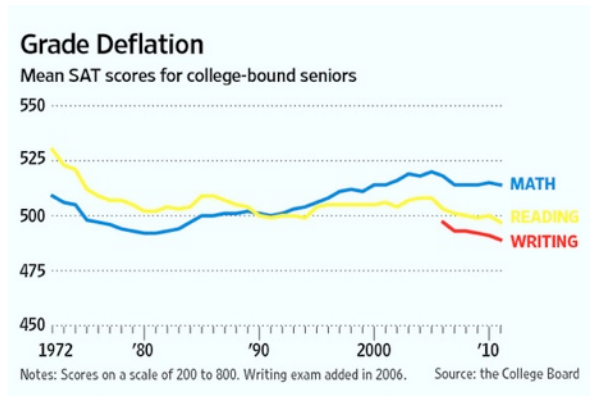
The website <http://www.IBO.org> is a great resource for learning about the IB programs and acquiring detailed information about how IB benefits our students.

SAT Reading, Writing Scores Hit Low

By Stephanie Banchemo, *The Wall Street Journal* 9/15/2011

SAT scores for the high-school graduating class of 2011 fell in all three subject areas, and the average reading and writing scores were the lowest ever recorded, according to data released on Wednesday.

The results from the college-entrance exam, taken by about 1.6 million students, also revealed that only 43% of students posted a score high enough to indicate they were ready to succeed in college, according to the College Board, the nonprofit that administers the exam. Students had to score a 1550 out of a possible 2400 to meet that benchmark, which would indicate a 65% chance of getting at least a B-minus average in the first year of college, the Board calculated.



The report on the SAT, long known as the Scholastic Aptitude Test, comes on the heels of results from the ACT college-entrance exam that suggested only 25% of high-school graduates who took that exam were ready for college. And results from national high-school math and reading exams show only modest progress over the past five years. The data highlight the difficult task faced by the Obama administration in pursuing education policies to help Americans remain globally competitive.

"At the precise time the importance of a college degree is increasing, the ability of the U.S. to compete in a global economy is decreasing," said Jim Montoya, vice president of the College Board. "We, as a nation, have to do a better job preparing our kids for college."

For the graduating class of 2011, the average reading score dropped to 497 from 500 points in 2010, on a 200-to-800-point scale. That is the lowest score since 1972, when the College Board began calculating the average scores of individual graduating classes. Reading scores have been steadily declining since 2005.

The writing score dipped to 489, down from 491 last year. Writing scores have gone down almost every year since the exam was first given in 2006. In math, the 2011 graduating class posted a composite score of 514, down from 515 in 2010. Math scores have bounced up and down a few points annually for a decade.

The SAT scores are closely watched because the exam measures the achievement of students who hope to attend America's top colleges.

College Board officials noted that the declining scores can be attributed, in part, to a larger and more diverse test-taking population. As more students aim for college and sit for the exam, scores decline.

Ten years ago, 8% of test takers were Latino, compared with 15% in 2011. For black students, the percentage jumped to 13%, compared with 9% in 2001. A growing percentage of students also grew up speaking a language other than English, and more than one-fifth of this year's test takers were poor enough to receive a

waiver to take the exam for free.

Students who took a core curriculum, defined as four years of English and three or more of math, natural science and social science, did much better. Still, only 49% of them posted a score high enough to be considered college-ready, compared with 30% of students who didn't take a core. College Board officials noted that the reading scores have been declining most dramatically for students who took less than a core curriculum.

Kent Williamson, executive director of the National Council of Teachers of English, said that during the past decade, he has seen a narrowing of how reading is taught. "In many schools, especially those most impoverished, reading programs are not about building cognitive abilities or a love of reading," he said. "They are built around rote learning of language, and I think we are seeing the results of that."

At THS we strongly believe in the importance of raising reading comprehension and assuring lifelong learning.

With the Accelerated Reader program, THS build a reading culture throughout the school that shows its effectiveness and success in all students. Look for more details of the Accelerated Math (AM) and Accelerated Reading (AR) program in the next edition of Bear Tracks.

PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEW ADDITIONAL FACULTY TO THS

Ashley Lapham - Second Grade Teacher

Britta Dulac - Fourth Grade Teacher

April Mollison - First Grade Associate Teacher

Nicole Woolley - Third Grade Associate Teacher

Lori Schoffstall - Fourth Grade Associate Teacher

Carrie Smith - Upper School Associate Teacher

Janelle Frazer - Upper School Associate Teacher

All new teacher profiles will be posted in the next Bear Tracks

Today

Meet Britta Dulac:

Britta was born in New Hampshire. Her family moved to Waterloo, Belgium and later to Prague during her middle and high school years. While there, Ms. Dulac attended International Schools where she was able to take part in the I.B. program. She returned to the U.S. to attend Kenyon College in Ohio where she received a B.A. in English, and then moved to San Francisco in 2005. Shortly after moving, Ms. Dulac received her Multiple Subject Teaching Credential from the Bay Area Teacher Training Institute at San Francisco State University. She was an associate teacher at Bentley School in Oakland for two years in grades one and three and then began teaching kindergarten. For the past year she has been working in San Francisco teaching fourth grade.

Ms. Dulac has always known that she has a passion for working with children. She is invested in creating an inspiring environment for children to learn, grow and discover as individuals. She encourages a classroom community where students work together to inquire and investigate and where each accommodate multiple learning styles with emphasis on hands-on learning.



BRAVISSIMO

A FESTIVE NIGHT of ELEGANCE

Benefitting The Healdsburg School



February 11, 2012 John Ash Vintners Inn, Santa Rosa

The Bravissimo Committee is in full swing and early ticket sales are an indication of the strong following and support that THS can look forward to with this annual fundraiser. This event has sold out in the last two years and we anticipate a full house again.

At this time we are offering Sponsoring Opportunities. These sponsorships are an important element in the early stages of event planning. Please find a personal or business option below that can support THS and our ongoing endeavor to provide the best K-8 education and high school preparatory in Sonoma County:

Presenting Sponsor: \$10,000

Grande Sponsor: \$ 3,000

Piccolo Sponsor: \$ 1,000

Friend Table Sponsor: \$ 500

Each sponsorship package includes a variety of marketing opportunities and ticket options. We have a package that will fit your needs. Please pick up a Sponsorship Form at the THS office or call us and we can fax or email one to you.

Bravissimo 2011 was a record breaking fundraiser for THS. We raised over \$120,000 with an additional special appeal to start a Library, bringing us to close \$200,000 in donations.

For 2012 we are anticipating another record breaking success. With your help, we will succeed!

Contact Amber Behrens at amberbehrens@comcast.net or 707-837-7902

School Elections

Thursday the 29th of September proved to be an exciting and inspiring day here at THS. Students competed in our 5th annual student council elections. The speeches given by the students were inspiring and energetic. The students were articulate, and they expressed their ideas and desires to make THS the best school in the county. The races were close, and the whole school was excited to participate by voting.

Introducing THS's 2011-12 Student Council:

President: Simon Fruth

Vice President: Tristan McCutchan

Treasurer: Cole Anderson

Secretary: Julia Dayton

Community Director: Madison MacPhail

Social and Spirit Directors: Yoneo Arai and Colby Groom

5th Representative: Caroline Legro

6th Representative: Annie Smith

7th Representative: Dante Dondero

8th Representative: Sofie Johnson



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Meeting minutes are on file in the School's main office and available for parents to review at any time. In the coming months the board will work with the Strategic Planning Committee evaluating the survey data presented at Back to School Night. Recommendations based on that data will follow and will be announced to the THS community at that time.

December is nominating time for new THS's Trustee's. If you are interested in becoming a member of a devoted group of parents, friends and community leaders, please contact Jim Headley, Trustee Committee Chair.



Please send inquiries in regards to Bear Tracks to bettinga@thehealdsburgschool.org. We'd love to hear from you!