



February 3, 2005

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

Whatever Happened to "C"?

In 1955, when I was in fifth grade, "C" was satisfactory. At a CDS faculty meeting last month Andre Perry had to remind us, "'C' hasn't been satisfactory for a long time." A lot has changed in those fifty years, but old notions linger even after half a century of change has made them obsolete. The big project for the faculty in January has been to revise our progress reports. Teachers and administrators have been working together to improve our ability to communicate what we want for students and how to measure their successes. This is a big job because we are still in the middle of a revolution, and as some physicist once said, "In times of crisis the nomenclature must be changed."

Many things were different in 1955. For one thing school wasn't really an education, but a series of challenges that separated the sheep from the goats. I was not so much taught to write, but given a series of writing assignments, which were then graded. A student's job was to make the grade. If we did, we thought it was because we were smart. If not, well, not everyone can be the best.

Although we were exhorted to try hard, our grade was not really something over which a student had much control. Even when we studied, there was no guarantee of success. We understood the reality: some people have it and some people don't. School was actually a social sorting device. The research, which continues to show that you can predict test scores by socioeconomic status, was a surprise not because we didn't know school was a sorting device. It was a surprise because we thought we were being sorted by intelligence, when really we were being sorted by class.

Somewhere between 1955 and 2005 it became no longer acceptable for a child not to succeed. No child can be "left behind." Certainly, since 1974 in schools where I have been Head, we have been held accountable for making a difference with each student. Teachers are expected to learn about learning differences. By then we had entered the Age of Self, in which self-esteem, self-realization, self-discovery and self-actualization also became goals.

I have always welcomed and continue to welcome this new world as an improvement over the old one. In 1955 teachers were expected to cover a curriculum; it was the students' job to measure up or not. Today, many teachers may be confused as to what they are responsible for, but at heart all good American teachers hold themselves accountable for the success (and even salvation) of each individual student. Parents have come to expect this too. "Failure is not an option."

There is another complicating phenomenon. In the revolution of rising

Hot Dates

Friday, February 4
10:15-10:30 a.m.
Friday Assembly
First grade presenting

Monday, February 7
6:30-8:30 p.m.
State of the School Night, Part II
Notre Dame Plaza common room

Thursday, February 10
Parent/teacher conferences
No school
No extended program

Friday, February 11
Parent/teacher conferences
No school
No extended program

Friday, February 11
Reenrollment contracts mailed



Thank You!

- To Sally Nielsen and Dan Keller for hosting the upcoming middle school movie night. We're sure you'll have a quiet evening.
- To Patricia Buse-Ruppert and Siegfried Ruppert for donating a refrigerator to the David Minus Science Center.
- To Sanlin Cory for donating childrens books to the Holy Family Day Home reading project.
- To Marianne Evans for helping with our preschool admission visits last week.

A Note of Appreciation from the Tepper-Curley Family

We want to express our heartfelt thanks to everyone in the 4th/5th grade class who pitched in to help our family during Marilyn's recent hospital stay. Also, a big thank you to Elizabeth McClellan for acting as chauffeur and delivering the delicious meals you prepared. We feel blessed by your generosity and support which is true to the CDS spirit.

Again, many thanks,

Marilyn, Bob, Eddie and Frieda

expectations, which has been a partner of America's rising affluence, all children must now be "above average." I was chatting with a prospective preschool parent about this in the hallway the other day and with some rolling of the eyes she came back with, "Of course! In America the only thing that is respected is *best*." Grade inflation is an obvious derivative of this shift.

Now we are all whipsawed in the double bind. On the one hand, we have to be the best (first in her class at MIT business school gets all the interviews) and on the other, we have to be our selves ("I only want you to be happy.") In order to accommodate both cultural requirements parents have taken to saying things like, "I want you to be the best that you can be." We are literally in a time of crisis.

In this crisis we actually have the opportunity to move our world in a good direction. We can seize the moment by returning to an old definition of education: Leading each child's unique character out into the world to function gracefully and effectively within it. After all, this is what

teachers seem to want to be charged with. Students respond well when we keep our focus on the development of their genius. Parents want it too. Almost all parents who apply to CDS say that their goals for their children are three-fold. At the end of nine years at Children's Day School they want their child to know more about what it means to be themselves, be able to get along well with others and to still love learning. Most agree that academic achievement will be something that happens on the way to these results rather than the other way around.

Part of the challenge of the report card project is to be clear about what we really want. It turns out to be harder than we think. Some chaff is still mixed in with the wheat. If all teachers and all parents want their children to grow in their ability to learn, to know themselves and to increase their ability to make something of themselves in their environment, that has important implications for what we evaluate and how we evaluate it.

Measuring our success solely on the basis of academic "achievement" simply misses the mark. Acting as if everyone can achieve the same level of success in all subjects is self-deceptive. Besides, what everyone really wants to focus on is growth. How much did a child grow? Is the child setting goals and achieving them? We need a new language.

The realm of student evaluation and assessment in this manner is a new frontier, and the old language and concepts die hard. Because they are woven into our psyches, we need to help each other find new language that is congruent with our new educational goals.

If "failure is not an option" (and that is the faculty's reality), and if "good" is a minimum accomplishment with excellence as everyone's goal, then we have to focus the students' (and parents') attention on acquiring the disciplines of learning, not just proscribed levels of subject mastery. That is achievable for everyone. If failure is not an option, then we cannot hold all students to the same academic standards, but we can hold them to the same standards of learning. All children are different—we all know that. What success looks like is different for each child in terms of academic achievement, artistic expression, athletic, musical or dramatic performance. It is a realistic goal that all CDS students become courageous, confident, perseverant, caring, disciplined, thoughtful and inquisitive learners. This can happen if we require respect and build a culture of responsibility that includes helping students

set realistic goals.

We are making good progress on our progress reports and this month, when you receive the reports, it will be your opportunity to give us some feedback on how we are doing. We invite you to participate in the conversation that will take us from an archaic definition of standards to a new, unique definition of success.

The Dirt

First Grade Shade Garden

The first grade class is planting a shade garden and I have never seen a group of students work with so much pride while planting. The first graders are bringing in shade tolerant plants from home and planting them with me. Sydney brought in a plant that she has been growing at home for several years and told me in detail how special the plant is. I have also noticed both Spencer and Chris walking over to the garden during recess to take a look at how their plants are faring. The next time you are in the schoolyard take a minute to admire the hard work of the first grade class. You can find the shade garden in the planter that runs along the side of the Leaping Lizard classroom.

From the Office

State of the School Night

Childcare will be provided during State of the School Night on Monday, February 7 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Childcare is \$5 an hour and pizza will be provided. Please call Rose at x10 to sign up.

Events

Tsunami Relief Bake Sale

Update from the Tsunami Task Force

The 7th grade has formed a task force to help tsunami victims. Our tsunami task force has decided to have a bake sale to raise money for tsunami relief. We are planning to have our bake sale at the State of the School Night on Monday, February 7. If you are willing to make treats please e-mail our task force correspondent Teija Corse at tkcorse@gmail.com with your contact information. When you email us we will give you specific details about the types of treats we need. Also, if

you have any general questions, please send us an email.

Spring Celebration & Auction

Saturday March 19, 2005

6 p.m.-midnight

Please join us for a fun-filled evening of eating, drinking, dancing and shopping. You will receive your invitation next week and we hope you will charm us with your presence.

Here's a taste of what you can expect - a buffet dinner will be served at 7.45 p.m. - you won't want to miss it!

MENU

Spanakopita

Dolmadakia

Bruscetta

Smoked salmon canapés

Crudités tray with vegetables and Tzatziki sauce

Assorted fruit and cheese tray

Spring mix greens

Chicken breast with mushrooms, artichoke hearts and white wine sauce

Vegetarian mousaka

Go Bulldogs!

Basketball Scores

January 29, CDS vs. French American School

Girls: FAIS 24, CDS 4

Boys: CDS 31, FAIS 27

January 31, CDS vs. San Francisco School

Boys: SFS 27, CDS 14

Basketball Calendar

Monday, February 7, 6 p.m.

Girls at Lycee Francais (Booker T. Washington Gym, Sutter and Presidio)

Monday, February 14, 6:30 p.m.

Boys at Lycee Francais (Booker T Washington Gym, Sutter and Presidio)

Monday, February 14, 3:45 p.m.

Girls at San Francisco School, Portola Park on Silliman St

Garlic mashed potatoes

Coffee and an assortment of delicious desserts
Please deliver your wonderful donations to CDS or Tina Corse by Friday, February 11. Artwork for business and personal ads, which will go in the auction program, are due by February 11 as well.

If you don't have time to volunteer please consider contributing to some of the services that we purchase to make the auction a success. Please call or email if you would like more information.

In addition, check out the CDS website for information about the auction. All of the paperwork can be found at: http://www.cds-sf.org/life_at_cds/springauction.html

Emma: 415-861-4283

Stephanie: 415-206-1107

Tina: tjcorse@comcast.net

Extended Program News

February Vacation Camp

Registration packets were sent home last week. If you are interested in signing your child up for our February 22-25 camp, please return your form as soon as possible. The theme for the week is "Our Neighborhood" and includes fun projects and field trips every day. Teachers include Josh, Gladys, Gloria, Ngoc and Adi. The deadline to sign up is Wednesday, February 16.

Summer Camp

It may seem too early, but summer is just around the corner. Summer camp packets for 2005 were sent home with the *Wacky* last week. Highlights include theme camps for preschool, kindergarten, elementary and middle school camps. Also, there is a new Youth Leadership Camp open to students entering grades 6-8 in fall 2005. Please call Jenna at x15 if you did not receive a packet. Extra copies can be sent home upon request.

Holy Family Day Home

This week several amazing 4th-7th graders (Haden, Henry, Aaron, Vivien and Ethan) and I headed to Holy Family Day Home and read stories in Spanish and English to their preschool "spaghetios" class of four and five year olds. We celebrated a successful first visit with a pit-stop at Maxfield's Café for treats. It was a great experience and it's exciting that this is now a

regular, weekly event as part of the after school program. If you would like your 4th-7th grader to participate, send an email or call Jenna at x15. Next week (and from now on) we will be leaving at 4 p.m. and returning at 4:40 p.m.

Library Corner

From Bats to Photography

The second semester is in high gear. The library workers are busy selecting and buying books to support an equally busy curriculum, with students studying subjects ranging from bats to photography to the water cycle to U.S. presidents.

Preschool students come into the library once a week to hear stories. Although they don't check out books on their own, parents are welcome to accompany their child to do so. Someone is often in the library at the end of school days, and during library periods: Mondays, 1:30-3 p.m.; Wednesdays, 9-10 a.m. and 12:30-1:30 p.m.; Thursdays, 9-10 a.m. and Fridays, 9-10 a.m.

Hot On the Shelves

The Caldecott Medal is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the artist of the

PTTA Corner

Friday Morning Coffee

Come join other parents for coffee and doughnuts in the yard after Friday drop-off, 8:30-9 a.m. This is your chance to meet other families, have a few minutes of grown-up conversation and grab sustenance and caffeine before you start your day.

In addition, we need volunteers on occasion to help set up and bring doughnuts. Please sign up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board. Nothing gets the kids out of bed in the morning like the knowledge that they will stop off for doughnuts during the drive to school!

PTTA Questions or Ideas?

Contact Marianne Evans, PTTA President, at (415) 648-1731 or goevansgo@yahoo.com.

most distinguished American picture book for children. This year's award went to Kevin Henkes for *Kitten's First Full Moon*, a simple story of a kitten who mistakes the moon for a bowl of milk.

The CDS library is proud to have a number of recent and older Caldecott books on its shelves. Although most are geared for grades K-3, these picture books often contain stories fitting for older children as well. Here are some select titles of medal winners and honor books:

2004

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus by Mo Willems.

A pigeon that longs to drive a bus sees a chance to make its dream come true when the bus driver takes a short break. (Grades K-3)

2002

The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins, illustrated by Brian Selznick, written by Barbara Kerley.

The true story of Victorian artist Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins, who built life-sized models of dinosaurs in the hope of educating the world about what these awe-inspiring ancient animals were like. (Grades 3-6)

Martin's Big Words: the Life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. illustrated by Bryan Collier, written by Doreen Rappaport.

Looks at the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, explaining his work to bring about a peaceful end to segregation. (Grades 3-6)

2001

So You Want to Be President? Illustrated by David Small, written by Judith St. George.

Presents an assortment of facts about the qualifications and characteristics of U.S. presidents, from George Washington to Bill Clinton. (Grades 3-6)

Casey at the Bat illustrated by Christopher Bing, written by Ernest Thayer.

A narrative poem about a celebrated baseball player who struck out in the crucial moment of a game. (Grades 3-6)

Olivia by Ian Falconer.

Whether at home getting ready for the day, enjoying the beach, or at bedtime, Olivia is a feisty pig who has too much energy for her own good. (Grades K-3)

A Child's Calendar illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman, text by John Updike.

A collection of 12 poems describing the activities in a child's life and the changes in the weather as the year moves from January to December. (Grades K-3)

1999

Snowflake Bentley, Illustrated by Mary Azarian, text by Jacqueline Briggs Martin.

A biography of a self-taught scientist who photographed thousands of individual snowflakes to study their unique formations. (Grades K-3)

1994

Grandfather's Journey by Allen Say; text edited by Walter Lorraine.

A Japanese-American man recounts his grandfather's journey to America, which the author also undertakes, and the feelings of being torn by a love for two different

Hola Familias de CDS

Hola a todas las familias de CDS!

Kindergarten is studying new words such as *corazon* (heart) and *amigos* (friends).

1st graders are studying sentences such as, *Dame maiz por favor, gracias.* (Give me corn please, thank you.)

2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students are studying *jugar*, or, to play in conjunction with sports and hobbies

Ms. Gladys' 6th and 7th graders are continuing to study grammar by looking at nouns, adjectives, pronouns and articles.

Ms. Geddes' 6th and 7th graders are studying the preterite and the imperfect past tenses in Spanish. They are also working on biographies of each other as well as beginning to look at biographies of notable people in conjunction with African American History Month.

La frase de la semana. The phrase of the week:

Cuando naciste? When were you born?

Everyone, don't forget to practice new word and phrases at home!

— Spanish Department

countries. (Grades K-3)

PTTA Update

Welcoming New Families

Thank you to the parents, members of the administration and teachers who participated in Tuesday's PT TA meeting and brainstorming session. Our primary topic was the buddy program and how parents and teachers might work together to improve it as we prepare to welcome new families to the school. As part of the "revamp" we have created a new PT TA officer position currently (and perhaps temporarily) named the Welcoming Committee/Community Building Chair. We are accepting nominations for this role! Please contact me if you are interested in knowing more about the role, or if you have someone in mind who might be a good fit! Stay tuned for further details.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 1 from 4:30-5:45 p.m. As part of our continuing community building discussion we will talk about volunteering at CDS and brainstorm ways we can ensure we are adequately reaching out to all families, new and returning, and encourage them to be involved. Please don't hesitate to contact me or any of the other PT TA officers directly if you will be unable to attend the meeting but have thoughts on the topic you would like to share.

—Marianne Evans, PT TA President

Upcoming Dates

Wednesday, February 16

Last day to sign up for the February vacation camp
(February 22-25)

Friday, February 18

Reenrollment contracts due
with 10% deposit

Saturday, March 19

6:30 p.m.-12:00 a.m.
Spring Celebration & Auction

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Submissions due Wednesdays 8 a m

