

Head's Report September 2018

Opening Week

CDS opened on Tuesday September 11th¹ with 475 students. See more specific information on this year's intake through the admission report.

Monday Sept. 10 kicked off the year as ECP and MS get to know you conferences were held. Open houses replaced conferences for the lower school due to the need for teachers to have time to set up the classrooms after the summer construction. ECP had open houses the Friday prior so students would be comfortable in their new spaces. Overall the enthusiasm and energy from students is incredible, they are literally running to school!

Our first day of school ended with a minor incident at 601 when a local park resident appearing to be in an altered state threw a bottle and brick at the school during dismissal. Immediately, we called 911 and brought the students inside. We were able to proceed with dismissal without incident. Since then, I have met with multiple police officers at the station and on the street and we have spoken with the Mission Station Captain. Some of the residents of Dolores Park immediately stepped up to protect the students and upon conversation with them it is clear they also want to be good neighbors and see our school as a place to protect. This situation was a good opportunity to test and reflect on our safety protocols.

Campus

The summer was filled with the sounds of construction at 333 as the Elevating St. Joseph's Hall project came to reality. A nice surprise of hardwood floors will make the already stunning halls more beautiful when they are refinished in the coming weeks. The feedback from teachers and students is that the spaces are warm, bright and well set up for student learning. The classrooms could not have been done on time without the extraordinary work of the construction team and the facilities team. There was a true can do spirit and clear focus on the goal of making the space safe and attractive for our students.

We expect all construction to be done by the end of September with the inspection for the elevator and the install of the hand rails and fence to be completed the week of 9/24. There may still be some finish work in the new lobby, conference room, and office as we are waiting for the accent lighting to arrive.

Very shortly, we will have collectively reached the goal of making SJH truly inclusive as we make the entire building truly accessible. Special thanks to Molly Huffman, Cheryl Ewers, John Castro, the ESJH committee and the the construction team for spending significant time over the year to get us to this point.

The construction team will continue to meet over the next few weeks until all details including the final punch list and financial reports are complete.

The Boys and Girls Club has been very supportive and open to our lease this year and we now have secured 4-5 each day for sport practices in addition to our daily use of their gym. James the manager of the Columbus club is very excited for any opportunities we can partner with

them. Cheryl and I toured the entire facility and there are some great opportunities to be considered.

Community

Chris Bunga has been a wonderful liaison for parents and is working to find ways to connect with all of our community members. Across the board, there is great enthusiasm to work with the PTTA.

Local partnerships are one of my focus projects over the year and I have begun meeting with local community members as well as potential partners including Grace Church, Boys and Girls Club, SF Police, local School Heads, neighbors, etc. If you have someone you think I should meet, please let me know!

Internally, we kicked off the year with a senior admin retreat to focus our work together where we finished by watching the movie Eighth Grade to experience a bit of the life of our students. Two all employee meetings started our August weeks. During those meetings, we explored the neighborhood as teams, build care packages for those experiencing homelessness, reflected on our CDS experiences, talked about our “Why, What and How” and looked at the strategic work ahead of us.

CDS has an employee satisfaction survey from the end of the 17/18 school year, however, I have only looked through the raw data. We will have a more thorough report of the trends at the next meeting.

New trustees participated in a CDS led orientation as well as Trusteeship 101 at the San Francisco School facilitated by Judith Glickman.

Human Resources

Hiring continued into the start of the year with an assistant to the head, Patricia Jameson starting on 9/17 and a new PE associate teacher starting as soon as all the paperwork is complete. Mr. Jim is subbing until Chris Harris starts.

New hires participated in a comprehensive orientation supported by many of the school departments.

Advancement

The ESJH campaign celebrated the ribbon cutting and Jeanna is in process of collecting the final pledges. We have launched the annual fund for 2018-19 and appreciate the BOT for their support.

Transition Plan

My focus this year will be aligned to the following set of objectives. More detail can be found on the Transition Plan.

- Relationship Objectives
- Academic and Curricular Objectives
- Operational Objectives
- Institutional Advancement Objectives

Space of Possibilities

Potential of the existing administrative position vacated by Ginny when she moved back into the classroom to be used as a “Teacher on Special Assignment” year long appointment to accomplish focused work for the CDS community and increase teacher retention.

Exploring opportunities in the Boys and Girls Club for increased partnership such as a library, etc.