

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023

Dear Parents,

**“We are so much more  
than a school, we are a  
family.”**



Over the last 2 weeks, I have once again been out and about. I have taken time to enter into conversations with our students. What is on their minds? These short but important interactions have been most revealing and rewarding.

In classes, I have again been privileged to observe students and teachers. In Humanity classes, I have witnessed intellectual debates and the grasping of difficult concepts. In Drama classes, students were stimulated by taking on roles that develop confidence and expression. In language classes, creative writing has been nurtured and senior students have been preparing for their examinations. In Chemistry and Biology, I have reflected on the amazing media shown to the students and the engaged teaching of the subjects. In the Art Department, I watched as our young artists painted self-portraits and shared their excitement as their skills were honed. I have watched students mastering physics problems and engaging with the magical logic of Mathematics. The Business Studies classes reflect a growing appreciation of the importance of entrepreneurship and the students are also fine-tuning their marketing and business skills for the annual Faire.

All of these experiences highlighted a number of points. Firstly, as I have reiterated a number of times, we are blessed with professional, dedicated and passionate teachers.

As Barack Obama said: “When I look back at the great teachers who shaped my life what I remember isn’t the way they prepared me to take a standardized test. What I remember is the way they taught me to believe in myself, to be curious about the world, to take charge of my own learning so that I could reach my full potential, to inspire me, to open up a window into parts of the world that I had never thought of before. That’s what good teaching is.”

Secondly, to our brave teenagers. As I chat with students, I realize that life is difficult for them. They face pressures and challenges that perhaps, as adults of a different generation, we do not understand.

To these students, know that we will be here for you. Yes, as teenagers you must develop “grit” or resilience, but you do not have to do this alone. The Bay Academy is a family.



I was so proud this week when I witnessed a number of students who took the time and effort to help others. Well done to all, you are an example for others to emulate. You are being a family. You are looking after the wellness of others.

I was reminded of Wellington College, a prestigious UK school, where wellness classes are timetabled as part of their curriculum. Topics that are covered include resilience, mindset, active-constructive responding and mindfulness.

Dr. Anthony Seldon, Headmaster of Wellington commented:

"There was a chorus of doubt and skepticism when we announced that children could be taught the skills of living happier lives, including the fundamental idea that acquiring 'stuff' does not make you happy, but helping others does.

Four years on, many schools have introduced similar lessons, in the UK and other parts of the world, and the subject is becoming established as a vital addition to the academic side of school life.

I think that teaching well-being has contributed significantly to the positive changes at our school, including an atmosphere of encouragement and a zero tolerance attitude to being unkindly."



The Bay Academy must be more than a school. Given the present torque in the world and the apparent deterioration of altruism and the rise of being self-serving, the school is on the right journey with our values to empower our students and the broader community to reflect on what is important and, more importantly, what is right. As with any journey, we have yet to arrive but we are on the path.

Let us not just be a school.

Kind regards

John Alexander

Principal