



The Bay Academy

Growing brave young adults to be skilled, tenacious, independent thinkers making a significant and sensitive contribution to society.

13th October 2023

Dear Parents,

Theodore Roosevelt – The man in the arena



Welcome back to the final term of 2023. I cannot believe how time has flown and that the end of the year is approaching with the important final examinations.

In the first Assembly of the term, I highlighted to the students the 4th term time frame. That while the term itself is 10 weeks long, there are actually only 7 weeks to the examinations. In light of this, I then encouraged the students to initiate a structured revision programme. To assist with this programme, the school will be conducting weekly sessions on examination techniques and study methods.

I highlighted many points during my Assembly address, but the key component I wish to single out for academic success in this newsletter is hard work.


To this end, I wish to turn to Theodore Roosevelt.

Theodore Roosevelt eloquently and profoundly commented in his “man in the arena”:



“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

In my Assembly, I mentioned that not all students can achieve distinctions, but all students can record their very best, irrespective of ability.



To succeed in the examination and academics overall, all students, regardless of ability, are required to “be in the arena”. To exhibit determination, commitment and a superlative work ethic. To struggle against procrastination, distractions and other personal challenges.

If a student has been “in the arena” and invested significant time and effort and recorded their very best work, then they can look back with pride on their academic journey. This sentiment is true for the high-achieving academic scholar who records outstanding excellence in examination results, and it is also true for the student whose results do not come easily. In both situations, the gifted academic and the student who struggles will need to have been “in the arena” to excel and take pride in their work.

I set a challenge to the students. Many schools celebrate 100% pass rates. This pass rate is normally referring to the Grade 12 results. A 100% pass rate at Grade 12 is to be celebrated. However, my challenge to the students is to achieve a 100% pass rate in all Grades. This is a huge challenge, but a goal that is worthy to attain. Am I being unrealistic? I think not.

As I explained to the students in the Assembly, sometimes students do need to repeat a year. It is in their best interest due to missed work or other factors. These are legitimate and well-thought-out decisions made by the school in consultation with the student and family. These students do not form part of my challenge as there are sound grounds for them repeating a year.

For other students, to progress well to the next Grade with their best results is expected. Expected not only by their teachers and their parents but more importantly, should be expected by the students themselves.

As mentioned, the teachers and school will provide important support in exam techniques and study methods. However, each student will need to step into “the arena” and work hard. Parents, we ask that you support your child and the school in our endeavour to achieve a 100% pass in all Grades at the end of the year.

Kind regards

John Alexander

Principal