

BROOKWOOD BANNER

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www.brookwood.edu

INSIDE

On the Front Line

The Brookwood Way: navigating your child's educational path

by Headmaster John Peterman

Over the last few years, I have heard some of our parents refer to "The Brookwood Way" when describing how our school meets the needs of their children. The more I heard the phrase, the more I began to wonder if it meant the same thing to different families. Was there indeed a unique Brookwood Way of doing things that had become so much a part of the school's fabric that those of us working in the middle of it couldn't see it clearly?

Many people over the years have referred to something similar, but the concept always seemed better left undefined, amorphous, intangible. We've heard folks tell us about "a feeling they had when they first walked into the building on a school day." Others referred to a "secret sauce." Yet efforts to give "The Brookwood Way" a literal meaning seemed to come up short; concrete definitions failed to capture the magic.

So when I was asked to write an article about "The Brookwood Way," I immediately felt the weight of trying to describe what was more an experience than a fact. What would capture the essence many of us experience on a daily basis?

I think it is important to first declare that Brookwood is by no means a perfect place. We don't pretend it is. The school community is an organic organization, a human enterprise that works with children. No two days are ever the same. The very nature of our work is messy and unpredictable, and we seldom see the outcome of our efforts in the long term. If parents desire a school that promises a smooth ride on a paved bike path, Brookwood is not the right place for their children. Ours is more like a mountain bike ride where children learn to navigate over a variety of challenging terrain, helmet securely fastened.

Let's start with the most important ingredient of the Brookwood Way: teachers. When we list the job criteria for potential faculty, we always include "sense of humor." We know the teachers must have a deep understanding and love for the age of the children they teach. But they also must appreciate the joy and unbridled enthusiasm for life and learning that children bring to them every day. This is where the exuberance found in our community comes from: teacher's joy mixed with children's natural

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Admissions Update

With our first open house behind us, the admissions season has officially begun and we're off to a great start.

We in Admissions are incredibly excited about the recent launch of Brookwood's new website. At the November 12 Open House, visitors and tour guides got a sneak peak of the redesigned site and the ways it offers both current and prospective families timely, interesting information about daily life at Brookwood (to read more about the website's new design go to page 7).

In addition to the website, we're thrilled about a new publication, *Brookwood School Curricular Goals: 2009-2010*. Hot off the press for the Open House, this publication outlines departmental goals and educational priorities here at Brookwood. Featuring departmental overviews as well as detailed curricular goals, the handbook is sure to be a valuable resource for current parents as well as applicant families (to read more about our Curricular Goals, see page 3).

In our ongoing effort to streamline the admissions experience, the Admissions Committee has adopted the nationally recognized Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE) for applicants to Grades 5-7. The ISEE will be offered at Brookwood on a Sunday in January and a Wednesday morning in February. We know that the individualized

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Current parents and applicant families will find the newly-published Brookwood School Curricular Goals 2009-2010 a valuable resource. See page 3 for more on the publication.

Board of Trustees Examines ‘Best Practices’

by Lisa DeConto, Vice-President
and Jayne Rice, President of the Parents’ Association

Earlier this fall, the Brookwood Board of Trustees welcomed Dr. Cathy Trower, of Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, to facilitate a workshop on “Board Best Practices.” In an ongoing effort by Brookwood’s Board to improve, develop and maintain the highest level of standards, the workshop’s intent was to identify distinct ways to improve board interaction and effectiveness, and thus improve our service to the school.

One key goal was to better understand how Brookwood’s peer schools apply best practices in their board rooms. Dr. Trower’s extensive work with independent schools on issues of board governance and leadership provided a huge amount of insightful, useful information. Dr. Trower has studied board governance, faculty employment issues, policies, and practices for the past 14 years.

In advance of the workshop, Dr. Trower asked each Trustee to answer thought-provoking questions such as “Why do I serve on Brookwood’s Board of Trustees?”; “How can I add the most value?”; “What are the ways in which I have helped Brookwood become a better school?”; “How do I support the Brookwood mission, the Board President, and the Board?; The Headmaster?”

Much of Dr. Trower’s guidance focused around the twelve principles that power exceptional boards:

1. Constructive Partnership
2. Mission Driven
3. Strategic Thinking
4. Culture of Inquiry
5. Independent-mindedness
6. Ethos of Transparency
7. Compliance with Integrity
8. Sustaining Resources
9. Results-oriented
10. Intentional Board Practices
11. Continuous Learning
12. Revitalization

With these points in mind, board members divided up into small, working groups and developed specific ideas on what we do well as a board; ways we can improve; and strategies to execute these Board Best Practices going forward.

“The presentation was excellent and energized the board as we started our work for the 2009-10 school year,” reflected Board Secretary Laurence Chase. “It was very helpful to take a step back and to look at what we are doing well and where we could make some improvements in our board practices. Dr. Trower had many practical suggestions that will help us to work more effectively and to stay true to Brookwood’s mission.”

Brookwood’s Board, this year consisting of 24 trustees, largely comprises current parents but has also included an educator trustee (this year, Bob Broudo, Head of Landmark School); a community leader (Tad Meyer from St. John’s served for four years); a young trustee (a Brookwood alumni/ae who graduated within the past 10 years); as well as the Head of the Parents’ Association and Headmaster, who serve ex-officio. Trustees serve a three-year term and often times a second, consecutive three-year term.

2009-2010 Board members are:

President

Sam Byrne

Vice-Presidents

Lisa DeConto
Jurrien Timmer

Treasurer

Tom Eddy

Secretary

Laurence Chase

Trustees

Tony Blackman
Bob Broudo
Shannon Cabot
Bill Charman
Richard Clark
Darrell Crate
Deborah Curran
Brook Dane
Sharon Fuller
Ivy George
Sarah Gould
Liesl Hawley
Pete Michaels
William Prickett
Doug Robie
Cliff Rucker
Jodie Stevenson
Patricia Zonnenberg

Parents’ Association President

Jayne Rice

Headmaster

John Peterman

Curricular Goals 2009-2010

During the month of December, current families will receive a copy of Brookwood's newly published *Brookwood School Curricular Goals: 2009-2010*. While Brookwood faculty continually work on curriculum development, this new publication outlining curricular goals, focal points, and philosophies for each of Brookwood's departments represents a great deal of work by individual faculty members, Department Coordinators, Division Heads, and Assistant Head of School Barb Liston.

"Producing a publication like this requires significant effort and involves, at various times, every faculty member in the school," says Barb Liston. "But the document is an authentic reflection of the kind of curricular work we do, steadying ourselves with a specific and shared academic philosophy and distilling our focal points so that our educational "aim" remains true. The document is, I hope, a clear representation of the school's over-arching curricular philosophy and of each department's goals in particular.

The publication includes an introduction to curriculum at Brookwood, as well as the school's position statement, *The New Face of Rigor: How Kids Learn Best*, and a breakdown, by department, of curricular goals. In all, 10 departments or subject areas within the school are covered: Language Arts, Library, Mathematics, Physical Education, Science, Social Studies, Technology, Visual Arts, and World Language.

All the information in the new publication is also included on Brookwood's newly redesigned website, on the Academics page, under the Curriculum at Brookwood tab. Here, departmental information is further delineated by grade level, and parents can read about grade-level focal points and how those may mesh across a department or a division.

"At Brookwood, we believe strongly that our curriculum is a living entity and one that is multidimensional. It is child-centered, process-oriented, and skills driven," Barb says.

Admissions, continued from front page

attention given to applicants during a visit is important and separating the screening from the visit will allow older applicants to focus on what it would be like to be a student here, without the added pressure of assessment.

In the upcoming months, we will be hosting a number of community coffees and want to thank our parent volunteers who have already offered to host one in their town. We will send email invitations to all current families in the hopes that they will forward the invitation to colleagues, friends, family and neighbors who may be interested in an independent school education for their children.

This is always an exciting time in Admissions. It's wonderful to welcome families during their first-time campus visits while working in partnership with our faculty and parent ambassadors. We look forward to an eventful admissions season.

The Brookwood Admissions Team

– Lindsay Murphy, Barbara DiGuiseppe and Linda Gamage

2009-2010 Annual Fund Kicks Off

During my first ten weeks as Brookwood's Director of Annual Fund and Parent Relations, I've had the pleasure of meeting and working with so many of you. As a parent to be, I find myself surrounded by wonderful role models at Brookwood, and for this experience I am grateful.

During this season of giving thanks, I'd also like to thank Brookwood families, alumni/ae and friends for their generosity thus far to the 2009-2010 Annual Fund. Under the enthusiastic leadership of co-chairs Laura Carrigan (Hannah '13 and Katie '16) and Jodie Stevenson (Grace '13) and several hard-working parent volunteers, the 2009-2010 Annual Fund currently stands at \$265,310, 46% of the \$575,000 goal.

Brookwood needs gifts from you—our parents, grandparents, alumni/ae and friends—to balance the operating budget, and to close the gap of \$3,725 (between the cost of tuition and what it actually costs to educate each Brookwood student.)

In 2008-2009 our amazing faculty and staff had 100% participation. This year we strive for similar success from the current parent community. What better way to honor Brookwood students than to give a gift to the Annual Fund, helping to ensure a bright future for our school.

We hope to engage more alumni/ae than ever before, reaching out through Facebook and our website. Furthermore, **every alum who makes a gift will be entered into a drawing to win two Red Sox tickets for a 2010 season game (donated by a Brookwood family) and limo service to and from Fenway Park.** So for all you parents with Brookwood alums, spread the word!

The 2009-2010 Annual Fund goal is to raise \$575,000 by June 30, 2010. Making a gift is easy through our new website www.brookwood.edu/supportbrookwood. Don't forget to ask your employer about matching gifts; what a simple way to double or triple your gift! On behalf of the Brookwood Annual Fund team, thank you for all you do for Brookwood.

-- Jen Hodgdon, Director of Annual Fund and Parent Relations

Important Lower School Curriculum

by Nancy Evans, Head of Lower School

We who teach in Brookwood's Lower School often talk about a "social" curriculum that is interconnected with the academic curriculum. We firmly believe that the academic curriculum is strengthened when children feel safe, are encouraged to take risks and learn from their mistakes, and when children honor the contributions made by others. It is our goal then to teach social competency, effective communication skills, and critical problem solving to even our youngest students here at Brookwood.

Our Lower School teachers are masters at facilitating both cooperative learning and independent learning in productive ways. Pre-K teachers Karen Shorr, Mikki Donovan and Jesica Moore talk about social competency being at the core of the curriculum and point to "Partner Time" as an example of cooperative work facilitated by teachers in the Pre-K classroom. In this activity, the names of two classmates are picked out of a "Fair Basket." The partners then greet each other with a handshake and discuss what activity they want to do with each other.



Second graders recently presented children's boxes to Wellspring Director Sarah Grow. The boxes, filled with kid-friendly items such as toys, food, hand-sewn heart pillows, and letters, will be given to children who arrive at Wellspring with their families.

The process allows both partners the opportunity to lead and to follow.

Social curriculum is also at the core of work by Kindergarten teachers Katie Alexander, Sarah Dawe, Katherine Harris and Isabelle Peabody. They passionately believe that if we are going to raise children to be effective communicators and critical problem solvers then we need to explicitly model and teach these skills. And so, when children share their academic work with the class, they learn to speak in front of a group with confidence and also what it means to be a respectful audience member. Children learn to offer suggestions and ask questions in an appropriate way that furthers other students' understanding of the material. Additionally, community building activities such as the Peace Wall, the Good

Morning Circle, and the Peace Place are daily components and rich experiences that give children the tools and language that they need for cooperating, communicating and resolving conflict.

Pam Hawes and Jeff Wilfahrt, our first grade teachers, begin their community building by having children generate, discuss and select classroom guidelines. The emphasis at this grade level is on "listening to each other and respecting the ideas of others." Project based learning in Social Studies and Math are structured to provide daily opportunities for group and cooperative work. "The academic day is what we post on whiteboards and wrestle with in our curriculum maps; the social curriculum is what makes it work," according to Pam and Jeff.

Because learning can be enhanced when in service to others, the First Grade also weaves service learning and civic responsibility into their social competency work by volunteering with Wellspring House. Teachers and Wellspring members help provide a window into lives that may be different from the lives some of our children may have.

In Second Grade, teachers Suzy Light and Elise DeVita have multiple social-academic curriculum pieces that are a part of every day. Shared reading, morning messages and meetings, the way children greet each other, problem solving and conflict resolution all teach important lessons and are all deeply embedded in the daily structure of each child's day. Also, the teachers' work with the children is guided by Responsive Classroom tenets and Lesley College's Peaceable Schools program. A particular focus, say Suzy and Elise, is "how conflict escalates and how students can create win-win solutions."

Our Lower School social curriculum guides children to effectively bring forward their ideas in a supportive environment. Teachers help model, remind and reinforce the helpful strategies for working with peers with the goal of equipping children with social skills that enhance empathy, compassion and problem-solving. Fostering such skills, we believe, not only fulfills Brookwood's mission to develop the selves as well as the minds of our students, but also empowers our children to communicate clearly, to resolve conflicts and be contributing members of a community.

Gr. 5 Salt Marsh Exploration

by Dr. Henry Oettinger, Gr. 5 Science

In what has become an annual Brookwood tradition, the Fifth Grade science classes recently visited a nearby salt marsh as part of our unit studying diverse aspects of these wonderful local habitats.

The proximity of Brookwood to the Atlantic Ocean, and in this case to the salt marsh, is an invaluable tool within our science curriculum. The Science Department continually evaluates ways to demonstrate these wonderful resources, and implements the best approaches into our curriculum. Where else could you step outside and have an outdoor laboratory at your feet?

Prior to our trip, we discussed how salt marshes are created and destroyed, and how the multitude of marsh plants and animals contribute to the survival of the marsh itself. One focus of our work was the concept of adaptations, a fundamental part of the process of evolution. An interesting example of this can be seen in the various cordgrass species (Genus *Spartina*) in the marsh. Students learned that because of adaptation, cordgrass is able to absorb salt water, which would typically kill most vegetation, and excrete the salt onto its outer leaves.

Outfitted for the expedition in waterproof boots and jackets, the fifth graders trekked down Dan Wise Way and across the road to the salt marsh. While we encouraged students to observe and explore with their eyes, in much the way naturalists do, we did bring along some nets and a few pieces of equipment. A fisherman's bait trap yielded spectacular views of live mummichogs (*Fundulus heteroclitus*) and the "catch of the day" was a foot-long American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*)!

Students were fascinated by the "unseen" effects of bacteria and fungi as well; these microscopic organisms are key to the decomposition of dead plant and animal matter, and produce a rich source of nutrients for new plant growth. As we progressed eastward through the marsh, we were fortunate to observe a great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*, the Brookwood mascot) take flight and move to find food sources safely away from the excited fifth graders.

Over the next few weeks, every fifth grader will present a poster summarizing one particular organism and its specific adaptations. We all gained a new fascination and respect for the salt marsh, and we will continue to explore with open eyes and open minds.



Central to Brookwood's mission and philosophy is the notion that

...emotions actually influence thought and that students learn best when they feel physically healthy, personally recognized, and emotionally safe. We know that personal change and growth occur through the experience of relationships, and that students construct the meaning of their worlds as a function of their stages of development in life, rather than by simply accepting an objective definition of that reality. (NFR)

If we at Brookwood are to establish and sustain these conditions for optimal learning, if we are really to ensure that kids feel "emotionally safe," then we must be attuned to their own experience of daily life. To ensure that they feel "personally recognized," those who work most closely with students must understand the developmental realities of the age group with whom they work; they must understand how kids of that age make sense of the world and how they prioritize their lives. In Grades Pre-K through Five, the self-contained classroom teacher is front and center in attending to the personal well being of each student in his or her class; however, in the Upper School it is the advisors who most explicitly focus on these more affective goals.

Upper School advisors serve as advocates for their advisees, but also as touchstones, navigators, and interpreters; they are liaisons between their advisees and the rest of the school. They are the central clearinghouse for logistics concerning their advisees, and they are the "pulse checkers" of advisee well being. When the sky falls for any reason, academic through familial, advisors orchestrate the caretaking that follows. Bottom line: the role of advisor is vital in ensuring that every student is connected to an adult within the school; that adult may not ultimately be the advisor, but that advisor must establish who that adult is. And that adult must be specifically focused on the personal recognition and emotional security of his or her charge.

With the generous support of several campaign donors, we have hatched a plan designed to make Brookwood's advisor program *sine pari* through expert training both inside and beyond the school walls.

First on our docket was the November 30 workshop with Sam Osherson for teachers in Grades 5-8. Sam Osherson, Ph.D., is former chair of the psychology faculty at the Fielding Graduate Institute where he is now a member of the faculty. Psychotherapist, teacher, and prolific author, he has written several books, including *Finding Our Fathers: How a Man's Life Is Shaped by the Relationship with His Father*, and *The Hidden Wisdom of Parents: Real Stories that Will Help You to Be a Better Parent*. Our workshop with Sam included an overview of specific early adolescent issues relative to cognitive development, separation/individuation, emerging sexuality, and risk taking. We looked at the ways adolescents try to connect with adults (even as they appear to be disconnecting!), as well as the reasons that adults, themselves, sometimes disconnect from adolescents. We examined the nature of real connection, as well as the reasons that adults are vital to adolescent development. Finally, we examined the ways in which our own individual experiences of adolescence can impact our respective abilities to listen effectively, relate, and connect to the students we serve.

Future workshops will focus on an appropriate counseling paradigm for advisory programs and on developing effective listening skills and responses that deepen relationships and thereby promote learning. Workshop leaders will include among them Ellen Porter Honnet, Ed.D., Director of The Stanley H. King Counseling Institute, who is a counseling and consulting psychologist with expertise in cross-cultural issues and adolescent sexuality. Recently a Psychology Fellow at Wellesley College Counseling Center and Harvard University Health Services, she was for several years Dean for Co-education at Harvard College.

Our work on advancing advisory skills at Brookwood will be ongoing, and it is likely to include sending several faculty members to the King Institute next summer. The plan is to grow increasingly specific over time so that we can thoughtfully identify any students who may have serious psychological difficulty and seek appropriate help; we deeply wish to be sensitive and deft in our handling of students who face specific challenges above and beyond those implicit in the adolescent experience challenges such as a family divorce, death, or medical condition.

We are very grateful to the donors who have made this advisory training possible, and we are eager to delve into the work that will allow us to offer the single best middle school advisory program possible.

www.brookwood.edu: new look, new features

Brookwood enthusiastically unveiled its new website in November, and all involved in its production hope that users in the school community are enjoying the new look and added features. The site was redesigned to help current students, parents and faculty access information more easily while also providing prospective students and families with a fresh and comprehensive window into our “Community of Exuberant Learners.”

“The site has been many months in the making and is a great addition to our communication efforts,” comment Communications Director Kacey Morris and Technology Director Doug Fodeman, who headed up the redesign. “We’re thrilled to be able to better share with our community highlights of the amazing people and programs here at Brookwood.”

The new design not only includes streamlined site navigation and updated information previously available on brookwood.edu, but also offers a host of new enhancements. For example, the eight profiles on the upper right-hand side of the homepage will be updated monthly, giving visitors a rotating sampling of faculty, student and alumni/ae accomplishments and campus highlights. The homepage also features a campus photo tour; a slide show, which will be updated biweekly, of recent campus events; as well as a news/announcements listing, which will be updated weekly, to help families stay current with Brookwood’s weekly calendar.

The site will continue to evolve, with several new additions planned. Future developments include an improved calendar display/function; the addition of event videos; a redesign of the library and student/teacher web pages; and a “renovation” of the alumni/ae section.

CLICK HERE . . .

to learn about Brookwood people and philosophies. Pull down menus include our mission, school traditions and history, parent login center, sustainability commitment and more.

CLICK HERE . . .

to view 2009-2010 admissions events and application details.

CLICK HERE . . .

to read about departmental curricular goals as well as grade-level benchmarks.

CLICK HERE . . .

to enjoy photos of original student performances and artwork and to read samples of writings by division.



CLICK HERE . . .

on any of these tabs across the top of the web page for information about the school. On pull downs you'll find links to all sorts of information. We invite you to explore.

At Brookwood, we believe in balance: rigor with compassion, excellence with exuberance, and self-discovery along with sensitivity to others.

For more than 50 years, Brookwood School has been instilling in students a lifelong love of learning – and graduating young adults of conscience, character, and compassion.

Get to know us. Click an image.



CLICK HERE . . .

to make a gift to the Annual Fund.

CLICK HERE . . .

to learn about distinguishing people and programs that comprise our community of exuberant learners.

The image shows the main content area of the website. On the left, there are three buttons: APPLY ONLINE, CAMPUS TOUR, and ALUMNI/AE FACEBOOK. On the right, there is a section titled "EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS" with a list of items: "November 19 School Meeting in School Meetings" followed by "1. Announcements & Headmaster's Quiz" and "2. CULTURAL ENRICHMENT: New England Conservatory Group". Below this is a large image of a school band performing. A caption below the band image reads: "Middle School Band is one of many group assemblies open to students."

CLICK HERE . . .

to keep up with the week's campus happenings and events.

DON'T CLICK HERE

. . . . this slide show automatically rotates, highlighting classroom projects, student activities and special presentations.

CLICK HERE . . .

to learn about before and after school care as well as descriptions of the 12 after-school programs offered this season.

CLICK HERE . . .

to enjoy a virtual tour around campus which details Brookwood's unique facilities and programs.

CLICK HERE . . .

if you are among our 1,168 graduates, we invite you to keep in touch with classmates and Brookwood by joining the school's Alumni/ae Facebook page.

and abundant enthusiasm. In turn, as our teachers share this joy with one another, a community of exuberant learners is nurtured collectively. Subsequently, a trust is built between teachers and students and an easy natural flow evolves. When one becomes part of the "flow," a

rhythm of learning becomes a natural way of living.

But let's not forget the human factor, especially the unpredictable, occasionally disheveled development of children. When faced with this challenge of nurturing the development of over 400 children, Brookwood's teachers and administrators set goals that we ultimately want our students to achieve. First and foremost among the goals, we want our graduates to be authentic young adults. We want them to be true to whoever they are and be proud of their individual personhood and achievements. Additionally, we work hard to develop experiences through which children can become resilient contributors to our world. Resilience can only be developed by allowing kids to take risks, then fail and finally succeed at their own pace. Once confidently resilient and true to themselves, these young people are capable of becoming compassionate, connected, and responsible members of our society.

Of course, Brookwood does not do this job alone. That is why we have always been a school that values a deep and sincere partnership with parents. As educators, we know what benefits kids within the school day. As parents, you know your kids best and have family values that we respect. Successful education happens when these two perspectives are intertwined and shared.

As I said earlier, The Brookwood Way is not a paved road. It is a path through quiet woods, over river rapids, across lonely deserts, and up steep mountains all navigated with thoughtful care. We are proud to be on this journey with your children and all of you.

The *Brookwood Banner* is published three times a year for the Brookwood School Community.

Editor: Kacey Morris

Editorial Board: Tory Carlson, Alicia Drury, Kristie Hambrecht, Jen Hodgdon, Barb Liston, & John Peterman



Brookwood School
One Brookwood Road
Manchester, MA 01944

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

BLOOD DRIVE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.



ADMISSIONS OPEN HOUSE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 1 - 3 P.M.