

From Student Advisory

Gladys Cortiella is a Spanish teacher at BAA who is in her last year at the school before retirement. As with many bilingual teachers, Gladys takes seriously the home-school relationship. She is also an advisor, and has put a practice in place to visit families in her advisory.

Dear Parents, Caregivers, Students, and Friends,

I am a believer. Achievement Gaps can be closed if each one of us makes an effort. With that I developed a professional goal: To visit the parents of my 10 advisees. My two objectives were to involve parents in the learning process by creating action steps to help their children accomplish their goals and secondly, to encourage them to be accountable for their children's success.

This was going to be a challenging task to accomplish, but I decided to push myself to do something I knew could be both possible and fulfilling. Some of my colleagues considered my goal crazy because I was adding more work to my already heavy work load. I persevered. I am committed to helping the students even if it means taking my personal and family time to accomplish this.

Two challenges arose, one much simpler than the other. To pursue this goal, I needed the support of my co-headmasters, which Ms. Nathan and Ms. Torres immediately gave. My second challenge was to convince my students to allow me to enter their homes without feeling that I was going to complain about them and get them in trouble. Students' first question was why? The second question regarded whether I would judge where and how they lived. My responses helped them feel more comfortable and more open to the opportunity for me to visit.

I began by visiting the student with the most academic challenges and who was also the most receptive to the visit. He was of Latino descent. I worked closely encouraging and supporting him as much as he would allow. Caring enough to visit his home to gain a better understanding of him and his life helped me gain his trust. Unfortunately, this student had long-standing struggles with school and ingrained patterns of behavior that negatively impacted his academic performance. He decided to drop out of school at the end of that school year.

Rather than feeling defeated, I found myself more determined to continue to reach out and better connect with my students and their families, believing that I could make a difference. Last term I visited another Latino boy's home and forged a successful personal and professional relationship with him and his family. His academic and artistic performance improved measurably.

I also made an informal social visit to the home of one of my senior girls. This effort served as a nice ice breaker to get to know her and her family better. I have scheduled a second more formal visit with her for this semester where we will discuss specific academic issues and higher education plans.

I also visited one of my freshman student's homes to better support this student who is having difficulty transitioning into the BAA school culture. This student's mother was so impressed. She could not believe I was going beyond the regular school schedule to make a home visit and help her son. I shared our homework planner with her and encouraged her to monitor her child's daily homework

My overall experience has been amazing. I have found parents to be both helpful and grateful for my support of their child. I am deeply touched by how proud each family has been to show me their homes. Every family has welcomed me and the visits have made our relationship grow significantly. These parents now realize they are a vital part of their children's success in school. That's what has made me a believer.

Sincerely,



Gladys Cortiella
World Languages Faculty



Ms. Cortiella (second from right) and her advisory.

MCAS Initiative

Linda Nathan and four BAA students participated in an MCAS legislative briefing at the State House in April. Representative Carl Sciortino and Senator Pam Resor are joint sponsors of a bill that will create a committee to develop multiple assessments to determine student competence as opposed to the current one high-stakes MCAS measurement. Many of their colleagues in the House and the Senate are joining with them to co-sponsor the legislation. In addition, a diverse group of supporting organizations is endorsing the bill, such as the Massachusetts Teachers Association and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. The legislation – if successful – would put a hold on the current requirement of withholding high school diplomas from students who do not receive a passing 10th grade MCAS score.

Ms. Nathan along with students, Deysi Melgar and Nathan Stockwell-Velazquez, joined a panel that addressed a capacity audience of legislators. They spoke eloquently about BAA's successful alternative assessments tools and also described how the ever-increasing burden of preparing students for the MCAS exam is compromising the school's ability to provide the rigorous arts and academic education that is the cornerstone of BAA's curriculum. Tenth grade theatre major Jay Cottle and eleventh grade theatre major Sebastien Charmant contributed their perspectives during the question and answer session as well as during the informal conversation that followed.

To find out more information on this important initiative visit www.citizensforpublicschools.org.

Senior Awards and Junior Step-Up

Wednesday, June 6, 2007 at 1:45 pm
Raab Auditorium at the Boston Public Library

Graduation

Friday, June 15, 2007 10:00 am
Symphony Hall, Mass Ave. and Huntington Ave.

Lunch refreshments provided for seniors and their families by families of the junior class.

Graduation Speaker

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot
BAA Alumni Parent, Educator & Author

Summer Graduation

Tuesday, August 21, 2007 at 2:00 pm

A Classroom Transformed



Three BAA freshmen doing business in an Ile-Ife marketplace during Africa Lives!

Early College Acceptances

Art Institute of Boston
Boston College
Boston Conservatory
Boston University
Connecticut College
Drew University
Emerson College
Florida State University
Johnson and Wales University
Lesley University
Long Island University
Marymount Mahattan College
Massachusetts College of Art
Newbury College
Northeastern University
Pace University
Purchase College
Regis College
Rhode Island College
Salem State College
School of Visual Arts
Suffolk University
Temple University
University of Hartford/Hartt School
UMass Amherst/Boston/Dartmouth
University of New Hampshire
University of Ohio
Virginia Commonwealth University
Wheaton College

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Parent/Caregiver News

The Parent/Caregiver Council (PCC) shared their concerns regarding student nutrition with Helen Mont-Ferguson, BPS Director of Food and Nutrition Services, at the March PCC meeting. Parent/Caregivers expressed their desire to see food choice improvements, healthier food options, and increased participation in food planning. Ms. Mont-Ferguson suggested that BAA establish a student advisory group that would work with the cafeteria manager to discuss the selection of current food offerings and to sample new food entrees that may be healthier and more appealing to our school community. The PCC would like to thank Ms. Mont-Ferguson for sharing her thoughtful ideas with the Parent /Caregiver Council.

In April, BAA held the first Healthy School Communities Pilot Study Grant meeting. BAA has been selected as a pilot site by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), to engage in a self-assessment of our school's structures, policies and norms to determine how well we promote, foster and maintain a healthy school community, based on the ASCD Healthy School Report Card. Through this study we will identify areas of strength and those that need improvement. The meeting was well attended by faculty, support staff, students, parents/caregivers, community partners and the BPS Food and Nutrition, Education Manager, Debra Korzec-Ramirez. Following completion of this assessment process, priority areas will be determined and an action plan for improvement implemented.

2007 Springfest

Thursday, May 31, 2007

7:00 pm Public Dance Performance

Friday, June 1, 2007

10:30 am Outreach
Dance Performance

7:00 Pubic Dance Performance

Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston MA 02215
On the Boston University campus

\$10 adults, \$5 students
Ticket Reservations: 617-594-7948

For more details about the performances, please check our website:
www.bostonartsacademy.org.

Soweto Strings



Many thanks to Anna and Peter Davol and George Simpson for hosting members of the Buskaid Soweto Strings Project at the Roland Hayes School of Music.

Students Making News

Three Deaf students took home prizes at the National ASL Poetry Competition at Northeastern University. Josephine Yu garnered first place for a visual arts piece depicting Deaf Culture. Chi Wai Kwong took second place for a visual arts piece depicting Deaf Culture; and Daniel Ilaire was awarded first place for ASL Storytelling.

BAA's Wind Ensemble participated in the MICCA (Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association) Festival at Lexington High School, where they won a Bronze Medal.

A piece of work by visual arts senior Jaleela Browder was selected during the 2007 Congressional Art Competition to be hung in the Cannon Tunnel of the U.S. Capitol building. Her piece, a pastel drawing titled "Self Portrait" was chosen by Congressman Michael E. Capuano and will represent the 8th Congressional District in Washington, D.C.

Junior vocalist, Zakiyyah Sutton was recently featured on WGBH Radio's *Eye on Education*.

We congratulate all of our students on these accomplishments.

Important Dates*

Monday, April 30

Jazz Night @ Ryles, 7 pm.

Check website calendar for details.

Special Open Board Mtg:

Middle School Discussion

Assembly Hall, 5-6:45 pm

Wednesday, May 2

†9th Grade Engineering

MCAS Test Prep 12:30-1:30 pm

BAA Goes to the Red Sox Game!

7:05 pm @ Fenway Park

Saturday, May 4

†SATs for Juniors @ 9 am

Various locations

Wednesday, May 9

Senior Visual Arts

Exhibition Opening 4-6 pm,

Sandra & Philip Gordon Gallery

†Parent Caregiver Council

Board Meeting, 6-7:30 pm

Friday, May 11

Spring Math Fair

Monday, May 14

Senior Music Recitals, Honors

Seully Hall, Boston Conservatory

Tuesday, May 15

Visual Arts Senior Review

Red Sox Game 7:05 pm

Friday, May 18

Humanities 4 Paper Due

Red Sox Game 7:05 pm

Saturday, May 19

†MCAS Intensive Prep @ BAA

for 10th Graders. 9 am - 12 pm

Red Sox Game 1:05 pm

Monday, May 21

BAA Benefit & Gala 6-8:30 pm

Wimberly Theatre at the BCA

(see page 4 for more details)

Tuesday, May 22

†MCAS for Grade 10 @ 8:00 am

†Late Start at 9:30 am for

Grades 9, 11 & 12

Wednesday, May 23

†MCAS for Grade 10 @ 8:00 am

Thursday, May 24

†BAA Special Schedule Day

(see insert)

Friday, May 25

†Staff Appreciation Day Lunch

1:30-3:30 pm (see insert)

Monday, May 28

Memorial Day-No School

Thursday, May 31

Springfest Dance Concert

Tsai Performance Center

1:00 & 7:00 pm

Friday, June 1

Springfest Dance Concert

Tsai Performance Center

10:30 am & 7:00 pm

* Calendar events are subject to change.
Please call to confirm times and dates.

† Important parent/caregiver date!

9th Annual Benefit & Gala

Boston Arts Academy would be unable to consistently send 95% of our graduates on to college were it not for our friends and supporters who passionately believe in the power of an arts education. Their year-round efforts help to raise additional funds necessary to pay for arts teachers, adjuncts, art supplies and production costs not covered by Boston Public School allocations.

Two of the Academy's closest friends, Ann Carter and Richard Rudman, are heading up the school's largest fundraising event as Chairs of BAA's 9th Annual Benefit and Gala. Both long-time BAA trustees, Ann was recently named CEO of Rasky Baerlein Strategic Communications and Richard serves as Senior Partner at the international law firm, DLA Piper. They are joined by 65-member Benefit Committee comprised of parents, educators, business and community leaders. Please join them as we come together on May 21 to celebrate the arts and honor Robert Pinsky, former Poet Laureate of the United States, with the school's 5th annual Apollo Award.

For tickets, contact David Dines at ddines@bostonartsacademy.org or 617-594-7956. For information on becoming an Individual or Corporate Sponsor, please contact Rick Tagliaferrri, Executive Director of the Boston Arts Academy Foundation at 617-635-6543 or rtagliaferrri@bostonartsacademy.org.

Boston Arts Academy
9th Annual Benefit & Gala
May 21, 2007 6-8:30 pm

Wimberly Theatre
Boston Center for the Arts
539 Tremont Street, Boston, MA



2007 Benefit & Gala Co-Chair,
Ann Carter



2007 Benefit & Gala Co-Chair,
Richard Rudman

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