VIRGINIA BEACH FRIENDS SCHOOL

Knowledge. Character. Community.

Head of School Report

March 2021

Overall Summary:
VBFS teachers will receive their second vaccination shots on Thursday, March 11. Fortunately *(and unfortunately)*, for these Friends School teachers, this second shot will be received over March Break. This timing allows for any adverse side effects that may occur on the individual level not to impact the school day.

Recently, Mike and Candice were members of a VAIS (Virginia Association of Independent Schools) Visiting Accreditation Team for Good Shepherd Episcopal School in Richmond from February 28-March 2. After a year that saw VAIS suspending all accreditation visits due to COVID-19, this was the first post COVID Zoom accreditation visit for the association. Mike and Candice were specifically selected for this VAIS Visiting Team due to their small school expertise with VBFS. Good Shepherd over the last five years has struggled with many of the same elements VBFS has. The three days of visiting were consumed by all day Zoom interactions meeting with the various GSES constituents.

As VBFS looks to the future, the 2022-23 academic year will be the school's self-study year for its ten-year re-accreditation. During the self-study year, VBFS will do a full 360-degree review of its entire program using the VAIS accreditation standards as benchmarks for our success. A VAIS Visiting Team will then arrive on campus during the fall of the 2023-24 academic year to evaluate the school's self-study work.

Finally, Friends School has reached March Break (March 8-12). This milestone signifies the final stretch as the third quarter of the school ends on Thursday, March 18. *The end is near!*

Admissions and Social Outreach Update:

- The 2020-21 school has 147 enrolled.
- There have been 73 inquiries in February for the 2021-22 academic year.
- As of March 4, the school has enrolled 19 students so far for next year, with the contract deadline March 15. Currently, we are projecting 166 students enrolled for the 2021-22 academic year.

Re-enrollment contracts were mailed March 1 with a return date of March 15. After re-enrollment contracts have returned, Candice will analyze exactly how many spots the school has open and send acceptance packets to the new students who have been accepted and met the first round of application deadline.

Candice expects to only have Cottage spots available after March 15. This would open up a second round of application with an April 15 deadline.

Academics:

Early Kindergarten for next year

For the 2021-22 academic year, VBFS is introducing a stand-alone Early Kindergarten class, an important and unique addition to our school structure. Lindsey Painter, the school's current Asst. PreK teacher, will be the Lead teacher. The Early Kindergarten program is designed to meet the needs of students who are intellectually ready for more challenging academic work but may not be age or socially emotionally ready for the full kindergarten program.

Stepping Up Night

Stepping Up Night was held on February 17, 2021. This is an annual enrollment event for current families to explore what their child's next year classroom experience is would be like. Teachers presented via Zoom. Parents had the opportunity to see and hear about the curriculum, ask questions of the classroom teacher, and get a vision of the VBFS curriculum scope and sequence.

Professional Development

A Professional Development Day will be held on Friday, March 18. Teachers will spend the morning discussing VAIS Accreditation Standards along with developing personal/professional goals for the 2021-22 academic year. The teachers will spend the afternoon preparing grades and comments for the end of the third quarter of academic work.

Development:

Anna Canada, VBFS Development Director, has been hard at work. Below, Anna highlights her past, current, and future initiatives.

Past

- The school hosted a cash-ola restaurant night at Shorebreak. We raised $480 for the annual fund.
- Anna and Chris Dotolo, SC Member, Demoed Wealth Engine, a software that assists in capital campaign fundraising, and have decided to move forward with using the platform for a donor prospecting, screening, contacting.
- The school received its first commitment to a naming opportunity associated with the capital campaign from Joanne Young, kicking off the campaign to an exciting start.
- The school received a substantial donation to the annual fund from Henry Burke.
- Anna and Mike met with the Dragas Family to emphasize our thanks for the improvements they made to the cottage and the significance it made in the enrollment jump.
- Total raised for Annual Fund: $152,068.32.

Current

- The school is planning an outdoor Covid safe VBFS community event at Farmhouse Brewery. Our event will run from 12-4, offer brewery tours, live music, food trucks, an art project for the children, and fresh air! The event will be held on Sunday April 11
- Anna is wrapping up finishing touches to the collateral that will accompany our capital campaign presentations
- Anna, Mike, and James O'Connor have been having ongoing conversations with George & Lynn Polizos on how we can honor their mother's legacy within the new construction project.

- Anna is demoing potential platforms for development needs. Salesforce looks to be promising right now and is free for non-profits.
- Anna is working with Teacher Barbara to secure sponsors for the yearbook so that we can distribute it without cost to the students and staff.
- Anna is working on getting a Capital Campaign (Make New Friends) Committee in place
- Anna has become increasingly more active on our social media pages. Parents and community members have mentioned a feeling of disconnect. By posting more pics and captions, our community is reminded of the exciting things happening at the school on a daily basis. She will be assuming the Social Media outreach responsibilities fully next year.
- Anna is doing a brilliant job continuing to offer support the pre-construction process with the ad hoc committee, WPL, SB Ballard, and HBA. She is also researching solar power and the potential for an installation on the new building.

Future

- FOUNDERS DAY- still tossing around ideas for a virtual type of event since it seems COVID will remain an issue.
- Anna continues to work on laying out the strategy for the capital campaign which we be a major focus over the next 2 months.

Budget and Finance:
B&F Report discussed at February's Budget and Finance Meeting.

Buildings and Grounds:
Davey Landscaping has been hired for the landscaping project and playground relocation starting over March Break.

WPL Site Design has been contracted to do updated survey work on the School and Meeting property to assist in creating documents for the school's CUP (Conditional Use Permit). WPL is working on a new master plan to go along with the CUP.

On Wednesday, March 4, Mike and John Katsias (VBFS alumnus and school's real estate expert) met with Pastor Scott Mims of the Lutheran Church that boarders the Meeting's property. Pastor Scott, John, and Mike walked the open green space behind the church. It was the hope of the school to secure a long-term ground lease of the church's back property and open green space.

Exciting News
During the conversation when Mike asked Pastor Scott if the church would be open to a lease, Pastor Scott said…

> *"We've talked as a community and want no remuneration for the use of the property. If the school would like to give a donation at some point, that would be kind. As good neighbors and as part of our church mission, we don't feel that's necessary."* To this John Katsias said with a smile. *"Pastor Scott, that's never happened to me in my entire career."*

John is working up the necessary paperwork that releases the church of any liability. Mike will work with Davey landscaping to get quotes on the necessary clean-up that has to occur to the space prior to use. Pastor Scott and the church are open to the school taking down more trees to expand the space and leveling off the playing area for the safety of the kids.

School and College Counseling:

College Acceptances

All of our seniors have been accepted into multiple colleges. The current list of acceptances includes:

- Bridgewater
- Christopher Newport University
- Eastern Mennonite University
- Virginia Wesleyan University
- Emory and Henry College
- Guilford College
- Hampton University
- Hollins University
- James Madison University Longwood University
- Mary Baldwin University
- Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
- ODU
- Pace University
- Radford University
- Randolph-Macon College
- Randolph College
- VCU
- University of Mary Washington
- University of North Carolina at Wilmington
- Sweet Briar College
- Roanoke College

An impressive considering VBFS only has five seniors. Final decisions on attendance will be made by May 1st. All of our seniors are very excited and even though they are not certain how their freshman year of college will look; they are looking forward to this next phase in their lives.

Recently, Dee met with the Diversity Committee to review and update the school's Diversity Statement and language for the school website. The Diversity Committee has approved the statement (see attached).

Special Programing:

Summer Camp

Summer Camp registration is officially live! All is going well so far with the first week of registration; so much so that we have almost reached our minimum goal for enrollment on a couple of weeks. We are anticipating another large rush of enrollment next week while families are on spring break.

Extended Care

Toddler through Kindergarten Section

- Johanna Taddiken (a parent of a current Pre-K student) has kindly offered to help us out with extended care in this section on Mondays and Wednesdays.
- We are URGENTLY looking to fill the following positions: Tuesday, Thursday & Friday; 3pm – 4:30pm (would leave earlier if student-teacher ratios resolve themselves)

1st – 4th Grade(s) Section

- We are URGENTLY looking to fill the following position: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday; 3pm – 6pm.

Co-Curricular Program(s)

After further consideration, we have decided to hold off this year on offering any type of co-curricular programming. We have realized that strain and stress placed on staff members this year is immense and they need a break. We will continue to ensure that the Extended Care and Summer Camp Programs get the support they need to provide the best experience possible to our current and future families.