VIRGINIA BEACH FRIENDS SCHOOL

Knowledge. Character. Community.

Head of School Report
May 2022

Overall Summary:
May has started with a celebration of VBFS faculty and staff for National Teacher Appreciation Week. From May 2-6, Friends Faculty were treated to daily pick-me-ups generously coordinated by our Parents' Association and Anna Canada, VBFS Development Director.

- Monday- Breakfast was provided in the lounge by Panera.
- Tuesday- Due to the AMAZING donations from all the parents, the school had a spin the wheel game and every faculty member won a $35 gift card!
- Wednesday- Lunch was provided in the lounge by Wegmans.
- Thursday- There were two chair massage therapists set up in the basement of the Meeting from 9-1.
- Friday- Teachers enjoyed a Happy Hour with adult-beverages and refreshments.

While teachers certainly appreciate appreciation, Friends faculty are appreciating even more that there are only three weeks of school left in the 2021-22 academic year. Along with working on final assessments for the year, Friends School classes are beginning to venture into the world outside 1537 Laskin Road. For the first time in two years since the pandemic broke, the school had its first overnight field trip with Grades 5/6 participating in a Richmond overnight field trip. The goal of the trip was to examine how the city of Richmond historically ties into aspects of American history the students are currently studying in class. Also, the Friends School 7/8 grade class spent a day at Busch Gardens on Friday, April 29. This was a congratulations for two years of getting through the pandemic and celebration of the 8th graders as they near the end of their time at Friends.

As the VBFS middle schoolers enjoyed experiential learning off the Friends School campus, the youngest VBFS students are enjoying hands-on learning on campus. Marissa Loli, VBFS Kindergarten teacher, is doing a month-long Country Study project with her students. During the last week of April, students learned about India courtesy of a student's mom and grandmother who hail from the country. During the study, the children celebrated the Indian Holi Holiday. *"Holi is a popular ancient Hindu festival, also known as the Festival of Spring, the Festival of Colours, or the Festival of Love." (Wikipedia).* Holi is known for its celebration of color that sees participants throwing colored powered at one another while wearing white. The kindergarten students, led by Marissa, ran around the Friends School field throwing a rainbow of powder at each other bringing the festival to life for each child. It was truly amazing to see! Up next, the class will learn about the Dragon Boat Festival of Taiwan and the art of Fernando Llort when they study El Salvador.

Regardless of age, learning is coming to life at Friends!

All the best, Mike (Head of School)

Admissions:

Enrollment Updated

As of May 5, VBFS has 135 students currently enrolled for next year. The enrollment goal for the 2022-23 academic year is 172 students. The internal enrollment goal is to enroll 150 students by June 2022 with the remaining 22 students enrolled over the summer months.

Strategic Planning:

SLRP Committee Updates

A final Long-Range Strategic Plan Document has bee drafted and is currently under review by the Board of Trustees. After the final Board review, the document will be shared with the entire VBFS community. The goal is to have the final SLRP readily available for sharing prior to the end of school.

Academics:

Faculty Updates

Contract letters have been given to all returning faculty. The school is still in the process of hiring for a third 1st/2nd grade classroom for next year.

VAIS and FCE Accreditation Preparation

The school continues to prepare for it VAIS preparation. We are considering renewing our Friends Council on Education accreditation at the same time as this is up for renewal.

Student Academic Overview

The ERB Test was administered during the first week of May. The Educational Records Board Test is an annual spring benchmarking test all Friends School students in grades 3 through 8 take. A letter was sent to the parents explaining the ERB tests, outlining the areas of testing and how the parents could assist in setting their child up for a positive testing experience.

Looking to the summer, Sandra Fink has been working with the Friends School teachers to create enrichment activities for students. Summer enrichment are suggested activities for children to do over the summer to keep their skills sharp. They can include reading, math, science and even Spanish. The activities are not intended to be mandatory, but fun, informal ways to keep the learning process going over the summer.

May will end with multiple field trips for students. The 3rd/4th grade is going to the Botanical Gardens, while the 1st/2nd grades are going to the Zoo. Early School (Cottage through Kindergarten) has a petting zoo, and touch-a-truck coming to campus toward the end of May.

Development:

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

April Review

PAST

- Hosted a successful community event for Earth Day on Friday April 22 from 3-5. There was an amazing turnout. Families participated in planting, making seed bombs, painting FRIENDship rocks, collecting trash, and eating 300 popsicles!
- Continued to expand our presence on social media outlets by posting frequently on Instagram and Facebook. We currently have 973 Instagram followers (+7 followers), shared 14 posts on Instagram this month and have shared 64 stories and 7 reels. Accounts reached: 1,458 (+22.2%). Accounts engaged: 177 (+5.9%).
- Created a landing page that will host Strategic Long Range Plan information.
- Edited and finalized the collateral for the capital campaign by including new renderings of interior spaces and updating enrollment and financial numbers throughout. Also naming opportunities were modified.
- Attended a NAIS webinar on Crisis Communication Management. It was very informative on how to handle situations that threaten the mission of the school and how to properly develop a crisis communications plan. Notes were circulated to Mike and Candice.
- Annual Fund unrestricted giving to date is $155,906.56 of the $220,000 goal. Restricted giving to date is $5,535.01. Gifts in kind to date is $1,098. Total giving to date is $168,074.58.

CURRENT

- Continue to update the "News" section of the website to include the latest on events, News & Notes, campus updates, and etc.
- PTO REVAMP!!! Next meeting is on May 9th and our focus will be on the upcoming End of Year Celebration fundraiser.
- Teacher Appreciation- PTO was able to raise over $1,200 from current families to support Teacher Appreciation Week May 2-May 6. Teachers are being recognized and spoiled with meals, gift cards, massages, and more!
- May 21 End of Year Celebration- There will live music, inflatables, petting zoo and a face painter, along with silent auction items. $30 tickets will be sold for this event. Cast Iron Catering food truck will be present, adult-beverages, and other yard games.
- Created teams for the fundraising and ticketing aspects for the End of Year Celebration event through the Rally Up platform. This goes live at the end of the first week of May.
- Will continue to increase activity on social media with reporting on improvements and interactions.
- Making edits to the external informational piece on the Strategic Long-Range Plan based on suggestions from the Board of Trustees.
- Working to secure final yearbook dedications and ads.

FUTURE

- Heavy focus on End of Year Celebration planning and fundraising.
- Work to plan an alumni social meet up/basketball game in connection with Field Day.
- Work to get the communications side of PCR merged and up and running.
- Create guidelines for "asks" being made to parents via avenues that aren't currently going through the Development office.
- Focusing on setting up capital campaign meetings.

Day of Giving Celebration: May 21

Parent volunteers are currently helping to collect and log silent auction items. All items will need to be to the school by May 9th which will also coincide with our May PTO meeting. Baskets and auction will be set up during that following week and an online auction will go live on May 16th and will run until the day of the event. On May 21st bidding will end for items and people will be able to take them home that day.

Anna will handle logistics of the event for activity reservations. We will also be asking for parent volunteers to help host and set up for the event.

Buildings and Grounds:

Masterplan, Stormwater, Easement, and Triangle Property

On Friday, April 22, Larry Herz and Mike Barclay had a Zoom meeting with Attorney Bryan Plumlee. During the meeting, Att. Plumlee discussed the process his office underwent to prepare the appropriate legal documents for the school's stormwater easement documents. Att. Plumlee also explained the complexities behind the ongoing transfer of the Triangle property back to the Meeting.

Joint Property Committee

The Meeting is currently discussing whether they would like Bert Poole to finish the updating of the land lease between the School and Meeting, or if they would like an outside attorney to review the updated lease before moving forward.

Student Life and Diversity:

Meeting Student Needs

As the world emerges from the pandemic, national studies are showing that teachers are currently facing a difficult challenge. All students have been affected in immeasurable ways by the past two years. It is very important for teachers to receive training in strategies that will help them to face the specific needs of students both behaviorally and academically. The pandemic has inflamed a young person mental health crisis with suicide, depression and anxiety exploding. Sandra and Dee are working to find trainings that will support and empower our teachers to enable them to help our student achieve success.

Diversity and Inclusion

Dr. ClauDean Kizart, Director of Tidewater Community College's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion program had multiple meetings with faculty on how to continue incorporating diverse text into the Friends School curriculum.

8th-Grade Matriculation

Friends School 8th-grade students are looking forward to graduation and moving on to their next chapter. All seven of our graduates have a solidified their decisions for next year. All of our graduates have done a great job of finding the path that feels right for them. We are very proud of their success.

- One will be attending the Hague School.
- One will be attending Norfolk Academy.
- One has been accepted into the Science STEM Academy in VB public school.
- One is waitlisted for the same program and will be attending regular public if not accepted.
- One returning to the United Kingdom.
- Two will be attending VB public schools.

Military Friends

Dee is in the process of planning an outing in May for the families to get together as a group. The school has also implemented some of the ideas the families had regarding support for new families.