



:: monthly news from The Bay School of San Francisco - November 2006

**In this issue:**

[Letter from Head of School](#)  
The Purpose of an Ethical Education

**Academics**

- Ethics Across the Curriculum
- "This I Believe" Essays
- Student Perspectives on Immigration Reform

[The Bay School Community](#)  
Every Day Ethical Practice

**News & Events**

- Athletics: A Fall Winning Streak
- Spirit Week
- First Trimester Performing Arts Gathering

[November & December Events Calendar](#)



[Print Version \[PDF 494KB\]](#)

**Letter from Head of School**

November 17, 2006



Malcolm H. Manson

Dear Friends

**School days, School days**  
**Good old golden rule days**

First, some pictures:

- Our fall trustee retreat coincided with freshman orientation. Eight students who all unknowing had volunteered to help with the freshmen were corralled in to the board room and asked about their school experience. They expatiated on the community spirit, the faculty, the opportunity to pursue their own passions. One trustee asked, "What about science, technology, religion and ethics? Aren't they the core of the school?" "Oh yes," they replied, "they are everywhere." They had become so much a part of the school that they are no longer remarkable, at any rate, to juniors and sophomores.
- The advanced biology class was studying genetically engineered food—rice, when I was in the room. Clearly the product was more nutritious, more efficient to grow, etc. Then Matt Eddy, the teacher said, "I don't want to talk about it today, but you might start thinking if there are ethical issues here."
- The precept of the week was "We value a clear mind and a healthy, strong body; we do not intoxicate ourselves with alcohol, drugs, unhealthy food, or the misuse of technology." Inevitably, the adult speakers, notably the Headmaster, had seized the opportunity to lecture on the dangers of addiction and risk to the brain of early use. It took a sophomore girl to say that that was not the point. To paraphrase, "If you are physically fit you feel better!"

Ethics, its practice and its teaching, have been much in the news since Enron. Business schools, law schools, medical schools include required courses in their curriculum. Well and good. I believe, however, that this also misses the point.

The purpose of ethical education is not to reduce the amount of people doing wrong—cheating, lying, stealing. The purpose is rather to lead young people to the habit of intentional right action, even at some personal risk and discomfort. It is a joint effort of family, school, temple and church. It requires constant and

vigilant attention.

Clearly, our ethical precepts underscored in morning meetings keep the issues on the front burner. Clearly also, building a healthy community and a healthy family are necessary conditions. Clearly, there will be violations. (There are snakes in every Garden of Eden.) How we deal with these violations stretches us, as we balance the betrayal of the community and our compassion for the betrayer.

If our students learn nothing else about how to behave honorably, I hope they learn these three: we are responsible for what we say and do; truth-telling and transparency are the foundations of integrity; taking time to stop and think before we speak and act saves a peck of trouble.

We are all called to be on the team that makes this work.

With all best wishes for a happy Thanksgiving,

Father Malcolm

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## Academics



Ryn Blecke-Fleischer  
Academic Dean

### Ethics Across the Curriculum

In today's global society, we are constantly confronted by ethical issues and decisions on both the micro and macro levels. From issues of personal ethical responsibility – "Does my vote on these propositions really matter? Should I be concerned about my own use of fossil fuels?" — to issues on the world stage — "What is our duty in acknowledging genocide in Africa? Are we responsible to the citizens of Iraq?" — decision making based on ethics and morals is of vital importance in our lives.

This reality is manifest throughout our curriculum at the Bay School. The integration of an ethical perspective is truly seamless and an important part of what we do here. There are numerous examples, in each class each week. As a snapshot, consider the following courses: in Digital Media, students are asked to think about their electronic identities—how they represent or misrepresent themselves on-line. Math II students, while modeling credit card debt, are asked to list the reasons why, or why not, Third World debt should be forgiven. The advanced level Mandarin courses have recently been discussing the "one child" policy in China, considering its many personal and societal implications. In Research and the Community, students are asked to undertake a major project focused on a community issue of significance to them personally, and to become engaged in the issue by thoroughly researching it, educating others, and proposing constructive responses. This type of exploration is something that sets The Bay School apart, and promotes a deepening awareness in our students that is designed to shape an ethical perspective both in their personal lives and in their view of the world around them.

Ryn Blecke-Fleischer  
Academic Dean

### Considering Individual Values in Writing Workshop



Students in Bill Brown's freshman Writing Workshop class have recently had a very meaningful opportunity to consider and articulate their core beliefs and values through a first trimester project focused on personal writing. Each student drafted a personal statement of between 350 and 500 words for submission to the National Public Radio (NPR) program 'This I Believe' that entailed identifying one of their core values and describing select life experiences that informed and illustrated the shaping of their beliefs.

Not only did the project ask students to examine their own beliefs and values, but through working collaboratively with their peers throughout the process of writing, editing, and submitting their work, students shared and considered a wide range of different values, life experiences, and points of view.



'This I Believe' is a national media project that has involved millions of people since its founding in the 1950's by the highly esteemed journalist Edward R. Murrow. In creating 'TIB' for broadcast on radio Murrow said that the program sought "to point to the common meeting grounds of beliefs, which is the essence of brotherhood and the floor of our civilization." Dan Geidiman, the current series producer observes that "as in the 1950's, this is a time when belief is dividing the nation and the world. We are not listening well, not understanding each other—we are simply disagreeing, or worse."

Fifteen Bay School student essays have been submitted to NPR for consideration, and if chosen will be posted on the NPR Web site and recorded for broadcast on NPR radio, joining an archive of more than 15,000 essays. The following six essays are examples of Bay School student projects.

**Trans-Racial Adoption**



October 9, 2006. Having been adopted from a Chinese orphanage as an infant, Bay School freshman **Myah Revilock** shares her experience and belief that trans-racial adoptive families can be enriching and loving environments for both children and parents—far outweighing any difficulties of a racial divide.

[Read and listen to essay.](#)

### I Believe in Being Yourself



September 28, 2006. Bay School freshman **Connor Booth** reflects upon the importance of recognizing and valuing each individual's unique contributions to the world—beginning with his own.

[Read and listen to essay.](#)

### A New World



September 20, 2006. Books and a love of reading transport 9th grader **Sarah Berkov** through time and history, helping her to arrive at a clearer perspective on herself.

[Read and listen to essay.](#)

### Password to Trust



September 28, 2006. Ninth grade technology enthusiast **Greg Karp** learned that the advantages of being trustworthy benefit both himself and others.

[Read and listen to essay.](#)

### Overcoming Challenges



September 20, 2006. Hard work and perseverance enabled **Noah Bergeron** to succeed in overcoming his childhood struggle to read at grade level. The experience taught him the life-long lesson that for all of us, nothing is impossible.

[Read and listen to essay.](#)

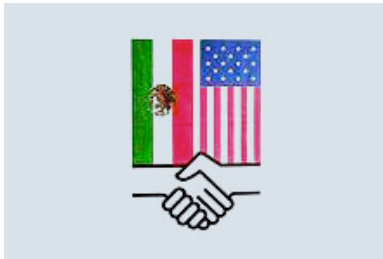
### I Believe in Honesty



October 2, 2006. Lying to her mother about having eaten a piece of cake taught teenager **Emma Kaufman** that honesty forms the foundation of trust and self-respect.

[Read and listen to essay.](#)

## Student Positions on Immigration Reform



### U.S. History Students Take Positions on the Immigration Debate

In their year-long course studying United States History Bay School juniors explore eight key themes that underpin the American experience from the country's founding to today. They have recently completed a study of the immigrant experience through focusing in the current debate over how to properly manage immigration that has recently been at the top of the nation's consciousness and legislative agenda.



Students began the unit by studying current immigration regulations and realities in order to formulate essential questions to guide their historical inquiry. Next they turned to a study of the history of immigration, chronologically investigating key periods and events. Because one of the main goals of the course is to acquire the historical understanding necessary to comprehend contemporary issues, the unit concluded with students being asked to participate directly in the debate by writing personal letters to California senators Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer in which they outlined their understanding of the issue, stated their position, and then proposed a policy that they believe would best resolve the issue. Their proposals reveal a deep consideration of the issue of immigration policy from a number of important viewpoints—economic, social, ethical, and practical perspectives.



Senator Diane Feinstein

Throughout the immigration reform project students worked closely and collaboratively together—reviewing and peer editing drafts to target and sharpen arguments, verify research, and refine the written presentation. It comes as no surprise that the letters reveal a broad spectrum of views and voices.

**(Letter from Angelina Gomez)**

**Dear Senator Feinstein,**

My name is Angelina Gomez. I was born and am growing up in San Francisco, a city that has been greatly affected by changes in immigration policies throughout the history of our nation. The diversity that makes my neighborhood and all of San Francisco so lively and unique is almost non-existent in most of the country. I have grown to value the richness and difference that peoples from other nations bring to our culture. I believe that the US needs to recognize and promote this diversity nationwide. By doing so, our American culture will be enriched, the economy will be stimulated, and the US will remain a safe haven of opportunity for people all over the world.

[Read entire letter.](#)

**(Letter from Francisco Ochoa)**

**Dear Senator Boxer,**

My name is Francisco Ochoa; I am 16 years old and I currently attend The Bay School of San Francisco where I am a junior. Recently in my US History course, we have been thoroughly discussing how immigration has historically affected the United States, and how it has helped to shape the wonderful country that it is today. We have been looking closely at the current US immigration policy, and some of the proposals that have been brought up to help shape it. As the son of two parents who were immigrants from Mexico, my bias is probably going to be very pronounced. However, I believe that some of the thoughts I have are not only true for me, but that most people would find reason within them.



Senator Barbara Boxer

[Read entire letter.](#)

**(Letter from Kelly Wyatt)**

**Dear Senator Boxer,**

My name is Kelly Wyatt, I am a high school student at the Bay School in San Francisco and am writing regarding the debate about immigration. My understanding of the issue is that there are two basic views. The first is that immigration is hurting the United States and should be slowed or stopped. Those of this opinion argue that the recent wave of immigration to the United States is bringing increased violence, drug use, prostitution, overpopulation, strain on resources, and job competition. The other view is that immigration is helping the United States and should be encouraged, or we at least shouldn't be putting much effort into trying to prevent it. My opinion is that illegal immigration, whether or not it is bringing money into the US economy, should be stopped. I think that all illegal immigrants, because they are breaking the United States' immigration laws, are criminals and I don't think this nation should allow criminals to live here unpunished.

[Read entire letter.](#)

**(Letter from Zach Fisher)**

**Senator Boxer:**

I'm a high school student at The Bay School of San Francisco, and have watched the passionate debate about immigration from both inside and out of my U.S. History class. Although the debate is extremely personal, and so complex that even the otherwise united Republican Party is divided over it, the real debate over legal and illegal immigration will boil down to the weighing of it's benefits, socially and economically. While many people's views change according to whether legal or undocumented immigrants are the group under consideration, my belief is that both illegal and legal immigration make our nation healthier economically, and therefore we should stop focusing on how to end illegal immigration and focus instead on expanding legal immigration.

[Read entire letter.](#)

**The Bay School Community**



Moneeka Settles  
Dean of Students

**Ethics and the Community**

Ethics continues to be an important pillar of the Bay School mission—one that is incorporated into daily life at school on many different levels and experienced in many different ways, shared by all members of the community. One key addition to our program this year is scheduling student advisory group meetings every other week during the 25 minute morning meeting time slot during which students and their faculty advisors discuss an ethical topic of interest. So far the school has discussed the following questions:

--Given that for most students a primary ethical pact made between friends is to never "turn someone in", but the school's ethical value is to encourage getting help—in what situations would you be concerned enough to seek help for a friend?

--Some parents and schools think it is wise to visit student MySpace pages in order to assess what students are doing and discussing. What are the ethical implications of this?

--We do value sharing, receiving and giving help—so in which ways is it difficult to know when you can give a friend help on homework and when it is not ok?

--Should Web sites that offer papers to be downloaded be allowed to exist? What is unethical about them?



With each prompt, students first discuss the question in their group and follow-up by writing their responses for posting on the all-school discussion board. This has allowed faculty and students to discuss tricky and interesting issues openly together without having to find the perfect solution or take a particular side. David, a sophomore, stated when asked about the value of these discussions, "It is great to discuss the ethical questions in advisory because you get to hear that different people have really different ideas about what is right—sometimes the boys have a really different take on an issue than the girls do." Sarah, a junior, added that students can discuss ethical issues and see what the faculty perspective is—it changes how students view faculty members because students are able to realize that adults are also questioning, just as students are. We are finding the open communication to be extremely valuable.

A second new element of the Bay School this year has been the creation of the Ethics and Conduct Committee. Eight students and nine faculty members meet regularly to discuss whether or not there should be a faculty/student judiciary council that would hear the student perspective during situations in which school rules have been broken. The committee would then discuss the issue and recommend consequences to the administration. The question of whether or not there should be a judiciary committee has created a fantastic opportunity for these students and adults to grapple with the very real and difficult scenarios involved in giving appropriate consequences to a student in order to encourage positive behavior and support the kind of school culture that we want to have. One member of the committee, Jamie, stated that "It is unique that this school involves the students. I feel like I am really involved, so much so that if the students get in trouble, I feel like it is my responsibility along with theirs to make this be the best place possible." And Andrew, a junior at Bay, stated that being on the committee feels really great because "I know that I am involved in the formation of the culture of the school and I know that what we create isn't simply the mandate of the faculty and administration but the creation of faculty and student conversations." Liza, a junior, adds that "it is wonderful to feel really listened to. I feel that my perspective as a student is being truly taken into account."

These two new programs have allowed the entire school to really grapple with ethical issues in a meaningful way and timely manner which is key to ensuring that we continue to embrace ethical analysis as central to our goals, strengthening our skills at tackling tough ethical questions.

**News & Events****Athletics – A Fall Winning Streak****Girls' Volleyball—Varsity Breaker Girls earn First League Co-Championship**

Our girls' varsity and JV volleyball teams finished their impressive league seasons with games against San Francisco Waldorf High School on Friday, November 3rd at Letterman Gym. With a big crowd of Bay School supporters cheering them on, the JV team beat SF Waldorf 2-0, and our varsity girls also triumphed by winning their game by 3-1. The varsity game left Bay School fans on the edge of their seats, and catapulted them into a co-championship with SF Waldorf as the number 1 seed in the BCL-Central League. Quite an accomplishment for Bay's first year as a member of the league!

**Boys' Soccer**

The Bay boys' soccer season has recently come to a close with some very exciting results to report. Our boys' varsity team ended their season in a close game against undefeated Gateway High School in the BCL-Central semi-finals 1-0. Our place as a top contender in the BCL-Central league was confirmed by several of our varsity soccer players having been awarded top honors.



Sophomore Roberto Flores was voted Co-MVP in our division; Matt Baron and Aleks Altberg, both juniors, were elected First Team All League; and freshman Anani Mohamed and junior Francisco Ochoa were voted Second Team All League. Congratulations to our first ever all-conference players!

**Boys and Girls Cross-Country**



Our Bay cross-country runners competed against each other in the first annual Bay School Mile run here in the Presidio on Wednesday, October 25th. Despite heavy rain and wind, our top male runner, Harry Ward finished at 6:03, and our top female runner, Angelina Gomez finished at 6:32. The team then headed into their league championship meet on November 7th at Lindley Field, marking the end of their league season. On November 18th, a handful of our top runners will compete in the North Coast Section (NCS) championship in Hayward.

**Girls' Golf**



Girls' golf finished their season on October 24th with a match against Urban High School. The Bay School's second girls' golf season had many highlights, including their participation in a round of golf with the USF women's golf team, giving the girls valuable insight into the game of golf. They also received a clinic from golf professionals at the Presidio Golf Course. The girls are looking forward to building on these experiences in the coming years. The future looks bright.

GO BREAKERS!

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### Fall Spirit Week

The entire school community spread the Bay spirit during a week-long celebration to mark the conclusion of the fall athletic season from October 30th-November 4th. Festivities began on Monday with Pajama Day, followed by an all-school Halloween celebration on Tuesday, Twin Day on Wednesday, Heritage Day on Thursday, and concluding with Bay Day on Friday. Three cheers go to the Social Events Club for planning and organizing a week full of fun!



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### Fall Trimester Performing Arts Gathering

The Bay School great room was vibrating with the beats of jazz instrumentals and vocals, tap dancing, and drama, as well as applause, at the fall performing arts gathering on Wednesday, November 1st.

Conducted by teacher Colin Williams, the Bay School Jazz Ensemble opened with Gershwin's "Lady Be Good", playing an arrangement inspired by Lester Young and Count Basie's 1937 recording, featuring Jake Haigh on guitar, accompanied by Olivia Gibson and Anna Foreman on vocals. The next tune was "Fever," played at the request of Bar Smith. "Fever" featured Anna and Olivia on vocals, Jordan Palamos on the trumpet, Jake Haigh on the guitar, and Amelia Mostovoy on the concert marimba. In closing, the group played "Honeysuckle Rose", Fats Waller's most famous composition, with Amelia on clarinet, Anna on the vocals, Daniel Baker and Bar Smith on the basses.



The dance elective "*Black Dance in America*" group performed a series of routines that displayed various characteristics that make up the art and technique of Tap Dance. Characteristics included syncopation, improvisation, invention, and personal style—characteristics similar to those of Jazz music. Not only did the students memorize set choreographic material, they had the opportunity to create original dance choreography and improvised tap steps and rhythms to live music. They danced their way in and out of the great room with style, rhythm, and creativity!

Drama students in Katherine Riley's Drama 1B course developed scenes for their gathering performance over the course of two weeks in-class. They began by brainstorming themes for them to "riff" on, and then broke into groups and improvised 5 short scenes. The initial "findings" were then previewed by the class that decided which scenes to develop further. The final scenes were a product of student improvisation and class critique; and were part of a unit on comedy and improvisation.

## Events Calendar

## November & December Events Calendar

Friday, November 17th	End of first trimester
Monday, November 20th	Faculty work day, trimester reports
November 20th-24th	Thanksgiving Holiday, no school
Tuesday, December 5th	Admissions Open House, 7-9 p.m.
Thursday, December 14th	Holiday Pot Luck Dinner on campus
December 18th – January 1st	Winter break, no school