



Buckingham Browne & Nichols School

December 17, 2010

An Update on Our Efforts to Ensure the Safest Possible Environment at BB&N

As students and faculty members head off to a well-deserved Winter Break over the next two weeks, I'm writing, as mentioned in my January 2010 letter, to update the BB&N community on steps that have occurred over the past year in respect to ensuring that the safest possible environment exists at BB&N now and in the future.

- Substantial time and attention has been dedicated this year toward updating anti-bullying policies and protocols at BB&N. As you may be aware, the Massachusetts legislature enacted strict new laws earlier this year that were designed to address the ongoing issue of student bullying in our school communities. The mandates of this new law are a natural extension of what was already a long-standing top priority here at BB&N: to promote and foster mutually respectful relations among all members of our school community.

Indeed, all of us who work at BB&N hold as paramount the responsibility to provide and maintain a learning environment that is free of bullying and any other verbal or physical misconduct which disrupts the learning environment or makes it unsafe. At the start of the year, we held a half-day session for BB&N faculty at our Professional Day, in which we provided training and/or reminders about recognizing, reacting to, and reporting bullying behavior if it occurs among students.

A number of administrators and faculty members have collaborated this fall on drafting a comprehensive anti-bullying prevention plan, which is intended (1) to prevent bullying and cyber-bullying among our students; (2) to encourage students and their parents to have confidence in the School's procedures and to come forward promptly whenever a student is subject to conduct that is prohibited by this or any other School policy; and (3) to implement appropriate discipline and other corrective measures when they are found to be warranted.

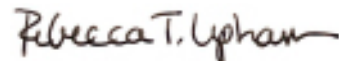
The draft of this document was emailed to BB&N families earlier this week for suggestions and feedback. [Please click here if you would like to review this draft](#) and offer feedback prior to January 7, 2011. Our intent is to finalize these policies in January 2011.

- The referral system that we launched in October 2008 to assist alumni/ae who were adversely impacted by Ted Washburn remains in place. This service may be contacted anonymously by any member of our alumni/ae community affected by Washburn. Information of how to access this service continues to reside on the alumni/ae page of BB&N's website. [Click here for the link](#) that will take you to that information.
- We have expanded our approach toward what was formerly a drug/alcohol education program for students spanning grades 7 to 11. This year, we joined with the Wellness Collaborative to offer our students and parents a more holistic approach, one that focuses not only on alcohol and drug education, but also stresses management, mindfulness, and overall social and emotional wellness. It's an important step, we believe, in fostering behaviors and attitudes that will help make our students stronger, safer, healthier, and happier.
- Internet safety is becoming an increasingly important area for schools and parents to focus on. BB&N has been educating students about internet safety for several years through its technology curriculum. Those efforts expanded this year with the addition of a well-received "cyber-bullying" orientation course for 9th graders at Bivouac. In addition, our faculty members were visited in late November by Danah Boyd, who has been called the "high priestess" of online social networking sites. Ms. Boyd offered us useful lessons in helping understand how and why teens behave the way they do in these social networking environments.

- This fall, BB&N welcomed aboard Joe Griffin to the newly created position of coordinator of safety and security. Prior to BB&N, Joe had served for 15 years as chief of police for the Town of Dover. In just four months, I've been thrilled to see the impact Joe has already had in increasing the sense of well-being among members of the BB&N community across all four campuses.

I would like to thank the many members of the BB&N community—students, faculty, administration, parents, alumni/ae—who have contributed to these multifaceted efforts to promote the health, safety, and happiness of our 997 students from grades B-12. All of these efforts and initiatives are, of course, ongoing in nature. We will continue to dedicate ourselves to building and maintaining the safest environment possible for our students. They deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca T. Upham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Rebecca T. Upham
Head of School