

## FROM THE HEAD of SCHOOL



*Dear members of the BB&N community,*

A former director at the school liked to cite a word from the art world that has since become a favorite of mine for conveying what BB&N, this dynamic place, is all about. The word is *tesserae*: the small, square tiles that are arranged to create larger mosaics.

I remember the tesserae image popping into my head when we were evaluating our mission and values statement a few years ago. As groups discussed what should be the key objectives in preparing our students to lead fulfilling lives, themes that kept bubbling up were the importance of engagement over self-absorption, of collaboration over isolation.

In other words, very “tesseral” ideals. You are all familiar with educational buzzwords such as “globalism” or “21st century learning.” Ultimately, these boil down to one fundamental truth: We’re all connected.

This has resonated powerfully for me during the past school year, and stretching into the summer and now fall. What I am seeing is a schoolwide culture of collaboration, from our youngest students spanning all the way up to our most veteran teachers, that has never been stronger than it is right now.

You will read about many outstanding examples involving our students in the pages that follow. Another widespread example has been the explosion of collaborative “professional growth” projects that our

teachers have embraced recently. These include Research for Better Teaching workshops, the ongoing Cadwell Collaborative sessions for B-2 faculty at the Lower School, and Global Online Academy coursework, to name just three.

Initiatives such as these are essential for sustaining the excellence of our school and our people. The payoff in how well we are able to teach, coach, and guide our students is incalculable. But it’s also a fact that these sorts of initiatives depend on your philanthropy to take root.

And support us you do. Steadfastly. Superbly. Surpassing \$3 million in annual donations to The BB&N Fund this past year was a breathtaking milestone (not to mention the additional \$2.2 million in capital support). When I announced the accomplishment at our opening faculty meeting in late August, I could see several teachers in the theater saying, “Wow!” to their neighbors, followed by a round of applause so loud I wonder if you almost might have heard it at your home or office that morning.

I wish you had. Because each of you—our donors, our volunteers, our ambassadors, our partners—are such vital tesserae, helping shape the larger masterpiece that is BB&N. On behalf of our 1,018 students and 300 faculty and staff members, thank you so much for your extraordinary support.

I can’t wait to see how the BB&N mosaic evolves this year, tile by tile!

*Rebecca T. Uphan*