

The Vision

Volume VIII Issue 7

"A Heritage of Virtue, Wisdom and Knowledge"

April and May 2009



Wisdom

◆ *Wisdom is knowing what to do next; virtue is doing it.*

David Starr Jordan

◆ *Honesty is the first chapter of the book of wisdom.*

Thomas Jefferson

Inside this issue:

<i>Raising the Standard</i>	/
<i>Wisdom</i>	/
<i>May 1st in History . . .</i>	/
<i>Time Changes for TPS</i>	2
<i>Why the Cotillion . . .</i>	2
<i>Thank you . . .</i>	2

Raising the Standard . . .

The title of this article is taken from the picture to the far right entitled, "Raising the Standard". Both the title and the picture are rooted in medieval history where a "standard" was actually an emblem or flag raised on a pole to indicate the rallying point in battle.

In the ongoing discussion of today regarding "state standards" in education it would behoove us to keep this poignant picture from the past in mind.

Once again this year we look to the issue of "standards" as the "standards" discussion has been cast in the national limelight by the recent article in Time Magazine entitled, "How to Raise Standards in America's Schools". If you have not had a chance to read the article, [we highly recommend it](#). While the article appears to be asking for national standards — something we are also hesitant to support — the article does bring into question the lack of real work students do each day, the current certification programs for teachers and the current tenure system. It also supports the viability of the charter school movement. This is the beat that TPS has been drumming and will continue to drum, especially as a school in California.

Here is an excellent excerpt from the article which summarizes the

entire issue for us: "*The current approach to standards has encouraged states to set even lower bars for proficiency. As a result, states can claim their students are meeting standards even as they fall behind the rest of the country.*"

We at TPS have been saying this all along. But, as if to drive the nail further into the coffin on our behalf, the excerpt continues with, "*Here's a look at the states with the lowest percentage of students deemed proficient by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test, compared with the percentage deemed proficient by their own state standards.*"

The article then lists the five lowest states in the country: Mississippi, Louisiana, New Mexico, California and Nevada. That's right, the state of California — one of the pillars of education just over two decades ago — is now sharing billing time with Mississippi and Louisiana.

The reality of the situation is this, all the talk we hear about "state standards" and the results of "standardized testing" is oxymoronic. As opposed to raising a flag or emblem high for all to see and rally around, the state is trampling on the flag we all call "excellent education" by creating sub par benchmarks for teachers and making them the prescript for "good education". In so doing they have created a systematic "dumbing



down" of education to the point that our children and students only learn what to think so that they can "achieve" the right test scores as opposed to learning how to think.

What is happening in public education brings back haunting memories of an episode from the "The New Twilight Zone" in 1985 entitled "Examination Day". In the not too distant future the government tests all children at a certain age. You watch as the parents of a young boy are fearful that their child will be taken away after he fails the government prescribed test. As the episode comes to an end the parents realize that their child will fail and they become greatly distraught. But, the twist in the story line is that the boy fails not because he lacks intelligence, but, instead, it is because he is so intelligent that he has learned to think for himself and ask the question "why"? In other words he has learned how to think.

On May 1st in History . . .

1852: Calamity Jane is born

1863: Battle of Chancellorsville begins

1917: Zimmermann Telegram published in United States

1931: President Herbert Hoover officially dedicates New York City's Empire State Building, pressing a button from the White House...

1941: *Citizen Kane* premieres

1958: President Eisenhower proclaims Law Day

1967: Elvis marries Priscilla

1991: Rickey Henderson breaks stolen base record

Time Changes for TPS . . .



As you may have heard already, TPS will be moving to a 7:30 to 2:30 school day in 2009-2010. This is taking us back to the days of old when TPS first began with the school day at 7:30. But there is more than our yearning for the “golden days” of TPS that is behind this change. There are actually several reasons for this decision and all of them are based in a strong effort to build a better education for our students.

The primary reason for the change comes out of the fact we operate a K-12 school. It is classical in nature, however we have to also realize that in order to offer the cultural experience the surrounding local middle and high school programs do, we must look at the student enrichment programs which are so attractive to students. In order to accomplish this, high schools start at 7:30 and go to 2:30 -- therefore the 2:30-3:30 time slot becomes what is called an "8th period" and still leaves times

for athletics afterwards. As we are building a very strong 6-8 athletic program as well, so the thinking is the same. It is between 2:30 and 3:30 that we can hold math, English, and science labs and athletic study halls to ensure all of our students have time to complete their work and still participate in representing TPS on and off the field. In addition, we can allow for more consistent and longer periods of music and theater training -- a program that is near and dear to many of our parents. And, we can allow the lower and upper school ASBs to have the time they need to function at a higher level. Thus, the 30 minute earlier start is very effective.

Another issue that has been regularly brought to our attention by parents in both upper and lower school is that students do not have enough time to do their homework after school. This allows for extra time to get home, get rested for a bit and to get homework done before dinner and bedtimes.

A secondary, but still important reason, is that the new start time will allow us to create a greater amount of space for our parents in both

the morning and in the afternoon for student pick-up and drop-offs, which has been an ongoing issue.

Finally, this is a "vision" issue. With the vision and mission we have set before us which is just as much about culture as it is academics — the two keys to a great education — we need to build a full K-12 program.

In the Time Magazine article, “How to Raise the Standard in America’s Schools” covered on page one there is an interesting observation made by the nation’s new Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, regarding what are called “creative schools” such a charter schools. Duncan states that when they look at all the creative schools that are getting dramatically better results, the common denominator is that the students are doing more.

It is true, the new start time is a bit earlier, but the end result will be that our students will be given the opportunity to do more of what it takes to have a better education.

Why The Cotillion . . .



The Cotillion is a type of dance developed in 18th Century France. Its name comes from the French word “cotillon” which means “petticoat” as a result of the ladies’ petticoats that became visible during the great movement of the dance. The Cotillion became popular in England and then America in the late 18th Century as well. While the dance began to fade on the horizon of history it is believed that the style was rekindled when Mrs. William Colford

Schermerhorn organized a cotillion for the New York society in 1854. Since that time the “cotillion” has become a means of training for students wherein they learn proper manners and social behavior. For many cotillions the students dress in formal attire, some even require the use of white gloves. The cotillion utilizes music, dance and often a nice meal to teach important social skills.

Which brings us to this year’s Third Annual Patriot’s Cotillion in which all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students are allowed to participate. This year’s Cotillion will take place on Friday, May 29th, 2009 from 12:00 PM to 3:30 PM at the Temuku Hills Country Club. This will be a time of food, entertainment, learning and, for some, adventure. Students will be getting dressed up, going to a very nice location and learning proper

social skills from asking someone to dance to using a napkin.

That is all the “what”. But the real question is “why”?

Emily Post, the mother of American manners, had this to say: “*Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others.*” In other words, learning manners is really learning to be sensitive to those around you. It teaches us that we are not the center of the universe, but instead, only a part. American writer and philosopher, Eric Hoffer, said: “*Rudeness is the weak man’s imitation of strength.*” Which is another way of saying that it takes true strength, the denial of self, to consider others first. So, in essence, the studying, learning, and use of proper manners is really founded in virtuous living – and that is what TPS is all about.

Thank you . . .

As we begin to wind down the 2008-2009 school year, we would like to express our deep appreciation to you, the parents, for your unending generosity when it comes to your time, talent and resources.

As we look back over the last nine months and even as we look forward to our final weeks, we are reminded of the tremendous amount that parents do for this school that

is part and parcel of providing a great educational program.

Parents fill necessary roles in so many ways: There are dozens of chaperones for field trips needed throughout the year, room moms and dads for each of the classes, SLC Committee leads and members, fundraising leads, staff appreciation efforts, and those that provide so much support for our students athletic and theater arts programs as well as the other after school enrichment activities

that are provided for the students.

The bottom line is this, you, our parents, are a very important piece of the machinery here at TPS and we are very grateful for all you do! Thank you so much for caring about our school, our staff, our students and your children. We are looking forward to a great year ahead!

