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INSIGHT

A Newsletter from Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys

SPRING | 2023

EDUCATION IS THE DOOR TO OPPORTUNITY

BISHOPWALKERSCHOOL.ORG

OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL

Mr. Molina's Farewell

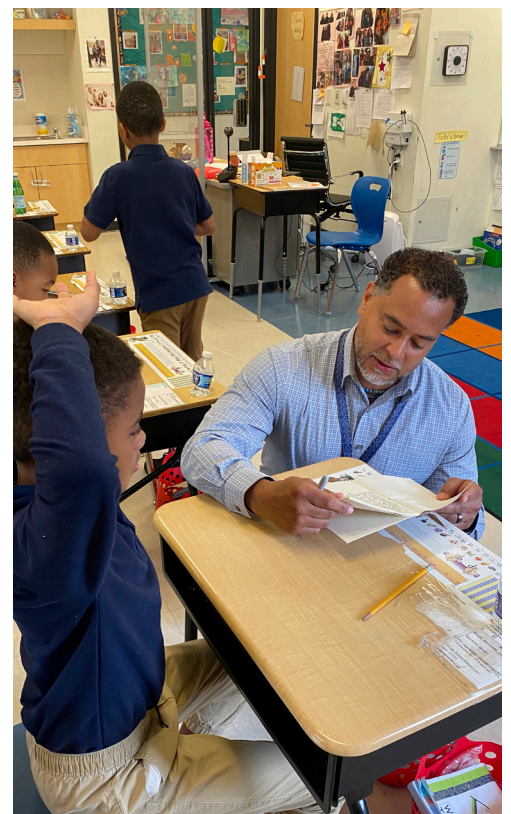
"I made my mark!" a first grader exclaimed as he decorated his journal. This was the second of six sessions I'm holding with each grade to make a journal as an act of togetherness, as I transition from Head of School to lifelong BWS supporter. At the suggestion of our wonderful first-grade teacher, Ms. Herron, and with the support of our art teacher and teaching resident, Ms. Edgecombe, the project will leave the boys with a journal and, hopefully, a lasting memory ahead of my departure.

In each class, I read *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds, which tells the story of a young girl, Vashti, who learns that she

can make art out of a single dot. Asking the students to think about what the author is trying to tell us, the boys and I will then talk about the importance of leaving our respective marks on the world, how I worked hard to create an impact on BWS, and how this journal is a place to store memories as we continue to grow. The boys are then encouraged to write or draw a good memory from this school year. Finally, I sign each book with an uplifting/supportive message. I also sing the praises of our incoming head, Dr. Angelina Arrington, and let the boys know that she too will leave her mark on BWS and on each of their lives.

Leading BWS has been the honor of my life, and we make sure the boys know that. Although I'm leaving this role, I will never leave my belief in their great potential. Onward!

Michael O. Molina
Head of School



The students were engaged and understood the premise of confidently making their mark, just like Mr. Molina aimed to do when he started working as Head of School.



HELLO FROM GHANA!

A Message to the BWS community from Dr. Angelina Arrington

Greetings from Semanhyia American School in Berekum-Senase, Ghana! This April and May, I'm completing a post-doctoral fellowship for the West African Research Association. My research is the culmination of a five-year process to integrate active learning techniques in rural Ghanaian classrooms. Ghanaian classrooms are typically teacher-directed and lecture-based, but education research tells us that children learn best by doing activities related to the curriculum rather than just listening. Over the past five years, I've trained teachers on how to facilitate small groups and partner work into their

lessons, as well as other strategies that get students moving, doing, and talking. I'll be assessing a sample group of students in language arts and mathematics to see how our efforts have helped deepen their learning. I'm also collecting feedback from teachers and other staff on active learning methods and what translates well culturally. Outside of my research duties, I'm meeting new people in the community and learning how to drive on red-clay village roads (the suspension system on the truck deserves an award!). I've also tried different coworking cafes and gone salsa dancing while visiting

schools in the capital, Accra. After coming here four times over the past five years, there's still so much to explore! Next week, I'm heading to Senegal to attend the e-Learning Africa Annual Conference and present a workshop on integrating active learning techniques in African classrooms. I'm excited that our work will be reaching a wider audience! I look forward to staying in touch and meeting everyone once my tenure begins. Cheers!



Dr. Arrington will become our new Head of School on July 1, 2023.

13th Annual Dinner

On March 2, the Washington National Cathedral was alight with celebration and splendor at the BWS Annual Dinner. 2023 marked the fifth year that the dinner was held at the Cathedral, and the evening's program—hosted by **Brian Harris**—told the story of this transformative time in the life of the Bishop Walker School.

The event raised over **\$1.2 million** for the school. We are beyond grateful for all who attended, gave generously, and helped make this the most impactful BWS Annual Dinner yet.



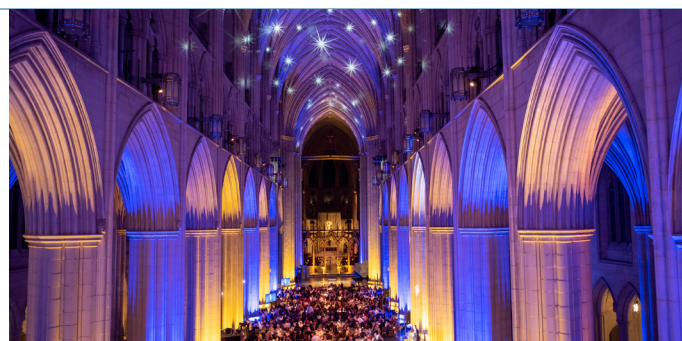
"Thank you for giving to educate my child, when you didn't even know him."

Olivia Henderson, BWS alumni parent

Save the date
for next year's
Annual Dinner:
**THURSDAY,
MARCH 7, 2024**



Jordan Freeman's performance was astonishing.



2023 Annual Dinner Highlights

Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC) founders **Chris and Lisa Smith** were honored with the BWS Spirit of DC award for their work creating the village around BWS scholars and their families.

Board Chair Andrew Clarke announced the completion of our SECURING THEIR FUTURE capital campaign, allowing our school to make a nearly \$3,000,000 payment to **stay at THEARC until 2067!**

Future Head of School, **Dr. Angelina Arrington**, received a warm and encouraging welcome from the Bishop Walker School community.

Alumnus Jordan Freeman, senior at Duke Ellington School of the Arts, performed two astoundingly beautiful operatic pieces.

Alumni parent Olivia Henderson, shared a story of the support her son received from BWS during a period of crisis for her family, ensuring that he was fed and never missed a day of school.

Mixing Poetry with Soccer

BWS has been partnering with the soccer and learning program **DC Scores** since 2021. DC Scores brings an elementary and middle school soccer league to neighborhoods that otherwise wouldn't have access to the sport. The soccer program adds poetry to its fall program and service-learning in the spring.

Soccer, poetry and service-learning may not sound like natural partners, but soccer coach and fifth-grade homeroom teacher **Nabil Odulate**

before. Soccer rewards skill, flair, and creativity, he explains, and the boys love this. He notes that they are enthusiastic and improving fast, forming bonds across grade level, and building social-emotional skills such as teamwork, leadership, and sportsmanship.

The BWS DC Scores team competed in a poetry slam this fall and are currently completing the service-learning unit of the program. The team decided to focus on a project that highlights

“They recognize that this is something they can excel at, and they can see the clear growth they’ve made personally and as a team in such a short space of time.” Nabil Odulate, BWS DC Scores Coach and 3-5th grade Teacher

explains that “they’re all ways for the boys to express themselves.” They all provide opportunities for the students to go out and represent their school.” This further develops the bonds between these third, fourth and fifth graders and the pride they have in their school.

Mr. Odulate—or “Mr. O.” as he’s known on campus—played soccer as a child and through college. He is an experienced coach who now coaches the (undefeated!) BWS team. Most of these boys have never played team sports

three major issues: racism, homelessness, and gentrification. They are currently working on presenting an argument for housing rights and against housing insecurity. They are writing letters to officials, such as Mayor Bowser, DC council members, Vice President Harris, and President Biden, asking them to prioritize housing justice because it is a big issue for DC. Additionally, the boys have chosen to volunteer at THEARC’S partner organizations like Covenant House and DC Central Kitchen.



Mr. O coaches the BWS DC Scores team



Team Poem

Growing up can make you learn
 New stuff! Middle school, high school
 And college might be tough
 Driving a car might be new,
 but don't worry little bro
 you're a part of the crew
 Getting a job might be hard
 Stick to the game plan
 Like a point guard
 A dollar and a dream
 Is all a kid needs
 Soccer and poetry
 DC Scores plants the seeds



One of three poems written by BWS poet-athletes and performed at the November DC Scores Poetry Slam, attended by 20 elementary schools from across Southeast DC..

The fall MAP Test* showed increases at every grade level.

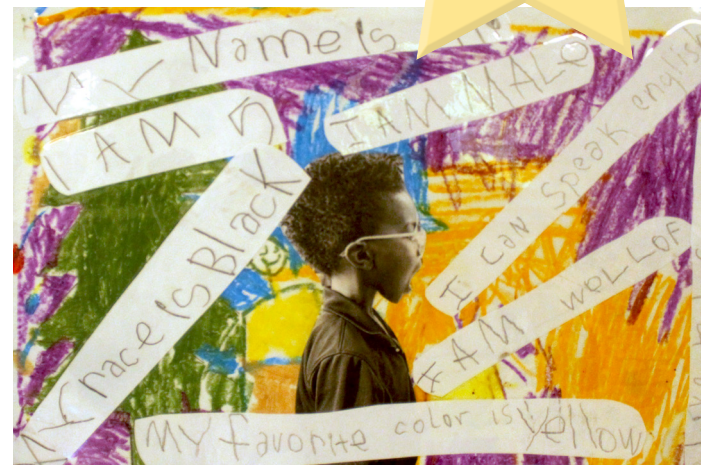
TESTING & LEARNING AT BWS

Ms. Chantel Thompson's Kindergarten students had never been exposed to testing before and for many, this was their first year in a classroom. It was MAP Test* day and they were nervous—and so was Ms. Thompson. She hoped her students would meet the 5 point increase that was considered the goal for reasonable growth. Their results were far better than that: up to 30 points higher than last test.

Testing showed improvement in learning across all grade levels at BWS, reflecting an increased focus on reading and math at school.

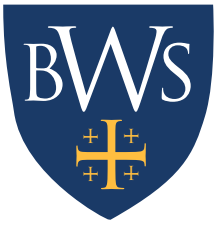
This means for that focusing on student achievement is not only working but is bearing fruit. The test results identify the strengths and needs of the students and also illustrate that nontraditional ways of learning, including interactive learning and field trips, are working.

“Students here take ownership and responsibility in their education” explained Ms. Thompson. When they do well it inspires the teachers to find more ways to engage them.



Ms. Thompson's “This is Me” project gave kindergarten students an opportunity to describe who they are.

*Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) test is a computer-adaptive standardized test used assess achievement and growth in K-12 reading, math, language and science.



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1801 MISSISSIPPI AVENUE, SE
WASHINGTON, DC 20020



ALUMNI



Fifth graders were invited to lunch with alumni and learn about life after elementary school.

FIRST ANNUAL BWS GRADUATE LUNCHEON!

On May 4th, BWS graduating 5th graders, Alumni, parents, and board members assembled in the library for our first annual graduate luncheon.

The program began with words from the Director of Outplacement and Graduate Support **Brian Harris**, Head of School **Michael Molina**, and former Head of School **James Woody**. The speakers emphasized the importance of celebrating the accomplishments of the young men of Bishop Walker School, and the power of staying connected to the Bishop Walker family.

SAVE THE DATES!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023 | Evensong & Installation of Dr. Arrington as Head of School
THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2024 | 2024 Annual Dinner

For more pictures like these, and to read more stories about the Bishop Walker School and its programs, please visit www.bishopwalkerschool.org or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter

