

PETROGLYPH

magazine

The Alexander Dawson School

winter 2010



Our Mission

The Alexander Dawson School at Rainbow Mountain is a nurturing, learning community for boys and girls from three-years-old through grade eight that challenges students to achieve excellence in mind, body and character.

As we begin the process of re-accreditation through the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), we are asked, as part of our self-study, to examine our mission and core beliefs. Below are some of our ongoing reflections.

- In academics, on our sports fields, and in our arts programs, we seek balance between collaboration and competition. Students learn to examine the world critically. Academic excellence and the joy of learning are interwoven throughout the curriculum.
- The guiding principles of our Community Outreach programs expressly speak to the virtues of compassion and humanitarianism; whether in our inner city peer tutoring program, our support of the Make-a-Wish Foundation, our weekly donations to the Rex Bell Elementary weekend food program, or our generous fundraising efforts for numerous international and local non-profit organizations and causes.
- The Character Education Program enriches our students' educational experiences in leadership, team-building, anti-bullying, diversity appreciation, ethical decision-making, and life-long learning skills.
- The Dawson Language Program exemplifies the ever-present nature of globalization. By sixth grade, students have been introduced to the Spanish language and Hispanic cultures, as well as a "buffet" of languages and cultures, including French, Mandarin and Latin.

- The School's Financial Assistance program benefits many families from a variety of economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. More than 20 percent of our student body receives financial assistance, and approximately 14 percent of our total revenues are devoted to our financial assistance program.
- The guiding principles of our Athletic Programs center around skill-building, teamwork, fair play, balanced playing time for all team members and camaraderie.
- The aesthetic surroundings and environmental qualities of our facility reflect our existence in harmony with the desert, while bringing the desert into the classroom to stimulate and inspire our students.

While this is only a brief summary of our commitment to the Dawson mission, these are guiding principles we put to work every day in our classrooms to provide the very best education for our students.

As you read through this *Petroglyph*, I hope you not only notice the specific ways in which we are meeting our mission, but also the ways in which Dawson is harnessing a love of learning in all of our students.



Michael Imperi, Headmaster



Logan Basharel, pre-k

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The abstract concepts surrounding economics can sometimes be difficult to learn for young students; however, third-grade teachers have discovered an innovative way to teach economics using a hands-on approach. For several weeks, students learn to apply economics concepts in their classroom’s “mini-societies.”

In second grade, these students were introduced to a similar study of economics on a classroom level. This year, third-grade teachers built upon those concepts on an individual level, reinforcing concepts learned the previous year.

Students began their unit by deciding on a name and currency for their classroom mini-societies. Third-grade classrooms became the Petrica Society, The Fantastic 17, the Smartsons and the Desert Kings & Queens.

Each week, students had the opportunity to earn money for various classroom activities, such as completing homework and good behavior. Students were responsible for keeping track of their income on their individual ledgers.

Although Friday was “pay day,” students learned that their “take home pay,” or net pay, is less because of tax deductions, which added up to \$10 per week, payable to the society’s treasury.

Students also learned how to apply for jobs and how to

conduct job interviews. They were able to apply for jobs within the mini-society, including Money Cutter, Banker/ Treasurer and Store Clerk. The Money Cutter produced the society’s currency. The Banker was responsible for paying all students and handling any withdrawals, and the Treasurer handled all deposits from the mini-society.

Students kept a running balance of the bank’s account and tracked the society’s tax collections. The Store Clerk filled orders for the mini-society’s Mercantile Store, where student could purchase materials to build products for their businesses.

Students were required to start businesses to grow the mini-society. They had a choice to work alone in a sole proprietorship, work with another student in a partnership, or work with a small group in a corporation.

When deciding which type of business to start, students considered a variety of criteria. Many chose a partnership or corporation because it allowed them to share their work with others, and some noted the social aspect of working with their friends.



Mira Gollard, Giulia Bartolotta and Autumn Coulthard

Hillary Giang, a member of the Fantastic 17, explained her reason for choosing a sole-proprietorship: “In the end, I won’t have to share my profits with anyone,” she said. Hillary decided to make drink coozies for her business.

Students wrote business plans, which included generating lists of resources with which to create their products and/ or services. With the income they earned in mini-society, students were able to “purchase” materials and supplies.

Within the school setting, each business conducted market surveys and purchased business licenses. They also were required to lease land, or space within the classroom, to set up their businesses. They had to rent equipment, consisting of tables and chairs, and they were required to keep complete business records through ledgers, purchase orders and other forms.

“Mini Society tapped the students’ motivation, creativity, leadership, and resourcefulness that resulted in a spectacular ‘real world’ entrepreneurial experience,” said Linda Hudson, third-grade teacher. “As entrepreneurs, they took more pride in their work, took risks, and found solutions to problems.

These are skills that businesses require in today’s competitive global economy. I marveled as I watched the students complete tasks that I thought would be difficult for them.”

As the culminating activity in each mini-society, classes conducted Market Day, where guests could visit the classrooms and “purchase” goods and services from the students’ businesses.

Some students made tangible goods, while some provided services, like massages and manicures. A few even decided to conduct game shows or magic acts.

Some students sold out of goods in mere minutes, teaching them valuable lessons about supply and demand. “Students learned how scarcity influences people’s buying decisions and the importance of supply and demand,” said Lantham Outhenthapanya, third-grade teacher.

Following market day, one third grader remarked, “I think I might open my own business one day, especially now that I know what it takes.”



CONSTRUCTING A SCHOOL

Rising from the desert, surrounded by open land and filled with possibility, a school was born. After 10 years, The Alexander Dawson School is surrounded by a thriving community and is filled with students who discover a love for learning every day.

As The Alexander Dawson School celebrates its 10th Anniversary, the School's trustees remember the first year the School opened and the excitement that permeated the community on opening day.

"Ten years ago, when the School was first being built, there was nothing in Summerlin. Desert Inn Road was simply a dirt road, and 215 hadn't even been built. The closest house was toward the northern part of Red Rock," remembers Oz Gutsche, trustee.

"The area was so far past the main parts of the city, we didn't even have any electricity or water for construction. We had to bring in generators and water trucks to build the school," adds Gutsche.

Today, residential and commercial development has expanded, building the

Summerlin community around a school that was once surrounded by wide, open spaces. Like the surrounding area, the School grew rapidly and successfully over the next 10 years, quickly becoming a prestigious, recognized name for exceptional education in Las Vegas.

"It couldn't have happened without the remarkable dedication of the parents of 120 founding students who took a chance and entrusted their most precious possessions to a brand new school," says Mario Borini, chairman of the School's Board of Trustees. "Some of them even toured the School before construction was complete, wearing hard hats," notes Gutsche.

For those involved in the planning and

construction of the School, there are many fond memories.

"On the first day of school, you could see parents dragging their kids into the front door, almost kicking and screaming," says Gutsche, "But the very next morning, we watched the kids hop out of their cars, so excited to get to school, they almost forgot to say goodbye to their parents."

Trustee Joe Borini remembers how much the students loved being at school. "There was a third grader whose parents had planned a family vacation the last week of school, and they wanted their child to miss school for the trip. The student was so upset about missing school to go on vacation; it just shows how much these kids just

loved coming to school," said Borini.

Since the School first opened 10 years ago, it has added additional grades, buildings and faculty.

"Overall, I think the caliber of our faculty has improved over the years and the quality of our students has risen, making The Alexander Dawson School one of the best schools in the Valley," says chairman Mario Borini.

While much has changed over the last 10 years, according to the trustees, a few things have always remained the same. "The philosophy of the School and its mission to serve its students remains consistent," Borini explained.

CELEBRATING FOUNDER'S DAY



As part of the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of The Alexander Dawson School, the Dawson community joined together on February 25, 2010, to hold the School's first Founder's Day, commemorating Jerry Henderson's 105th birthday.

Girard "Jerry" B. Henderson created The Alexander Dawson Foundation in 1957, naming it after his father, Alexander Dawson Henderson. The Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to education, founded The Alexander Dawson School in Colorado, as well as The Alexander Dawson School at Rainbow Mountain in Las Vegas.

Henderson believed that nothing came about without hard work and dedication, and he was an entrepreneur with a wide range of interests.

His first job was selling pots and pans door-to-door, which set the stage for Henderson's ambition and drive to become a savvy entrepreneur. He owned a crab meat processing plant in Beaufort, South Carolina, a cable television company in Carmel, California, a sailboat manufacturer in Nevada, a bank in Zurich, a sheep and cattle station in New Zealand and was an owner of an executive jet manufacturer in Savannah, Georgia.

Henderson was a director of the Avon Cosmetic Corporation for 40 years and was one of the nation's earliest pilots, earning his license in 1926.

In the 1960s, Henderson pioneered underground living as a cheaper, more efficient form of living, and built underground homes in Las Vegas and Colorado.

In 1967, Henderson's foundation created the Colorado Junior Republic School at Stapps Lake. The school started as a summer school for underprivileged children. It was later expanded into

a year-round school and then converted to a college preparatory program. The school was moved to Lafayette, Colorado, in 1970, where it was renamed The Dawson School.

The school's motto, "Nothing Without Labor," and Mr. Henderson's personal motto, "Love of the Land," reflect beliefs in self-sufficiency and hard work. These beliefs were also the original philosophical structure of the school. Although many changes have occurred, the original values of Mr. Henderson still guide both of his schools.

A supporter of life-long education, Henderson never stopped learning new things. He learned to play the organ in his 70s, and he was past 70 when he earned a helicopter pilot's license. He was perpetually inquisitive, especially about technology, and was always willing to try new things.

Members of the School's Board of Trustees have many fond memories of Henderson. According to Mario Borini, the Board's chairman, just knowing Jerry was a fond memory in and of itself. "He was a natural salesman, always had time for the kids and had an array of catchy phrases that resonated with the students," said Borini.

Henderson loved music and the arts and was often heard to say, "It is impossible to fight and sing at the same time."

The students at The Alexander Dawson School know Mr. Henderson only by name and by the statue that sits in front of the school, but to many who remember him, Henderson was an inspiration.

Each year, the School awards The Jerry Henderson Merit Scholarship, a full-tuition scholarship for a Middle School student in Mr. Henderson's honor.



(top) Students gathered in the Dining Hall to watch a video about Jerry Henderson's life and enjoyed celebratory cupcakes in honor of his 105th birthday.

(bottom) Parents, faculty and staff gathered around Henderson's statue to celebrate Founder's Day with refreshments.



Maxine McConnell, 8th grade Teambuilding

Developing Skills for Life

The philosophy of a Dawson education is that core academic subjects alone are not enough when preparing a student for a successful future. Thus, Dawson's curriculum includes an important focus on citizenship, character and life-skills to ensure our students are poised and prepared for the "real world."

In Middle School, students learn character and life-skills through an integrated curriculum, including courses on group dynamics, human growth and development, public speaking, financial literacy, current events, character education and Internet safety. Students rotate through each class at various times during their Middle School careers.

Beginning in fifth grade, students meet with Middle School counselor, Stella Finrock, to discuss these topics in broad detail. Starting in sixth grade, students begin taking more in-depth, formal courses in these areas.

Group Dynamics

Armed with new social awareness and cognitive abilities, many Middle School students struggle to interact comfortably and productively as adolescents. The group dynamics class requires students to use teamwork to solve problems.

Students use the School's outdoor challenge course to learn teamwork and conflict resolution. The course also teaches communication, trust and leadership.

Students creatively solve problems and then to reflect on the solution and the process by which it was achieved. In this class, reflecting on failures can offer a powerful teaching tool as well.

Public Speaking

The public speaking course teaches students to harness their intrinsic communication abilities and present them in an effective manner to an audience. The course focuses on writing an effective speech and presenting.

"Public speaking is a skill that students will use their entire lives, whether they are giving a presentation to a boardroom filled with people, or participating in a job interview," said Headmaster Michael Imperi, who team-teaches the

course with Dawson's drama teacher, Cameron Wright.

The culmination of the course includes the presentation of a three- to five-minute speech delivered to an audience of peers, faculty and parents.

Human Growth and Development

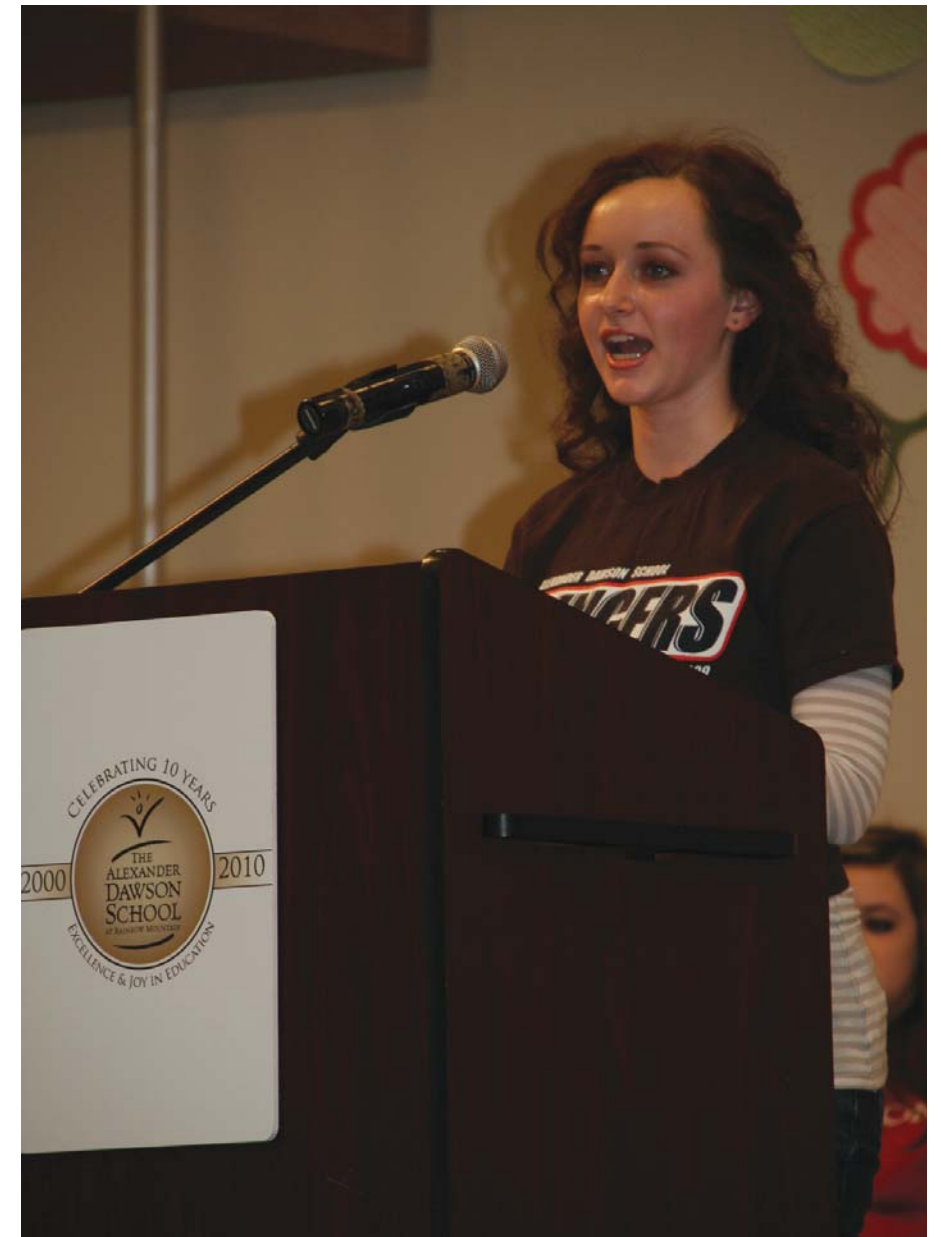
Middle School students participate in a human development course, which includes instruction on sexual behavior and sexual health. It's taught with several inherent values in mind to focus on the safety and well-being of students. Embedded into the course are lessons on self-esteem, individuality and respect for self and others.

As young adults, Middle School students may already be navigating through the world of intimacy, sexual identity, and relationships. These early years are pivotal for forming the attitudes and beliefs that affect their entire lives. We feel that students need complete information upon which to make intelligent decisions about their behavior and feel confident and competent about acting on these choices.

Internet Safety (i-Safe)

Never before have students had so much information at their fingertips. While advances in technology have drastically enriched learning and introduced a more global educational experience, these technological advances have also opened the doors for identity theft, cyber stalking and online bullying.

The i-SAFE program is an Internet safety program dedicated to educating and empowering students to safely and



(above) Alexis Ross, 8th grade Public Speaking

(below) Duran Heath, 6th grade Character Education



responsibly take control of their online experiences.

This program provides students with the critical thinking and decision-making skills they need to recognize and avoid dangerous and/or unlawful online behavior. The i-SAFE curriculum covers topics such as personal safety, cyber community issues, cyber predator identification, cyber security and intellectual property.

Financial Literacy

Dawson’s Financial Literacy program is intended to educate eighth-grade students about financial responsibility, savings and investing. Students are

impact of the outside world, as well as noticing the effect they can have on the world. Often, during adolescence, students do not grasp global concepts on a real level. Thus, current events

in Dawson’s Lower School, Middle School character education is also centered on programs developed by the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition at the Josephson Institute of Ethics.

This discussion-based curriculum uses videos which focus on traits that include: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship, honesty, courage, diligence and integrity.

“One of the most important aspects of Character Education is that it provides a framework through which students and teachers can work together to help students make better, more ethical choices,” said Russell Smith, Head of Middle School. “The ultimate goal is to provide students with a strong foundation to live their lives with good principles and a well-calibrated moral compass.”

“The ultimate goal is to provide students with a strong foundation to live their lives with good principles and a well-calibrated moral compass.”

Dr. Russell Smith,
Head of Middle School

introduced to the purposes of budgeting, the importance of savings and to the benefits of long-term investing.

The course is designed to engage students through problem-solving and critical thinking activities. Students examine current events regarding the economy and seek to find solutions to economic problems present in our society.

Current Events

When they reach Middle School, students are beginning to grasp the

courses help draw the students’ attention to major events occurring locally, nationally and internationally.

Connections are made between the past and present, and students are able to see how current events impact their lives. Students are able to choose current event topics that interest them to investigate and write reports, which are then presented formally to the class.

Character Education

A continuation from the character education curriculum implemented

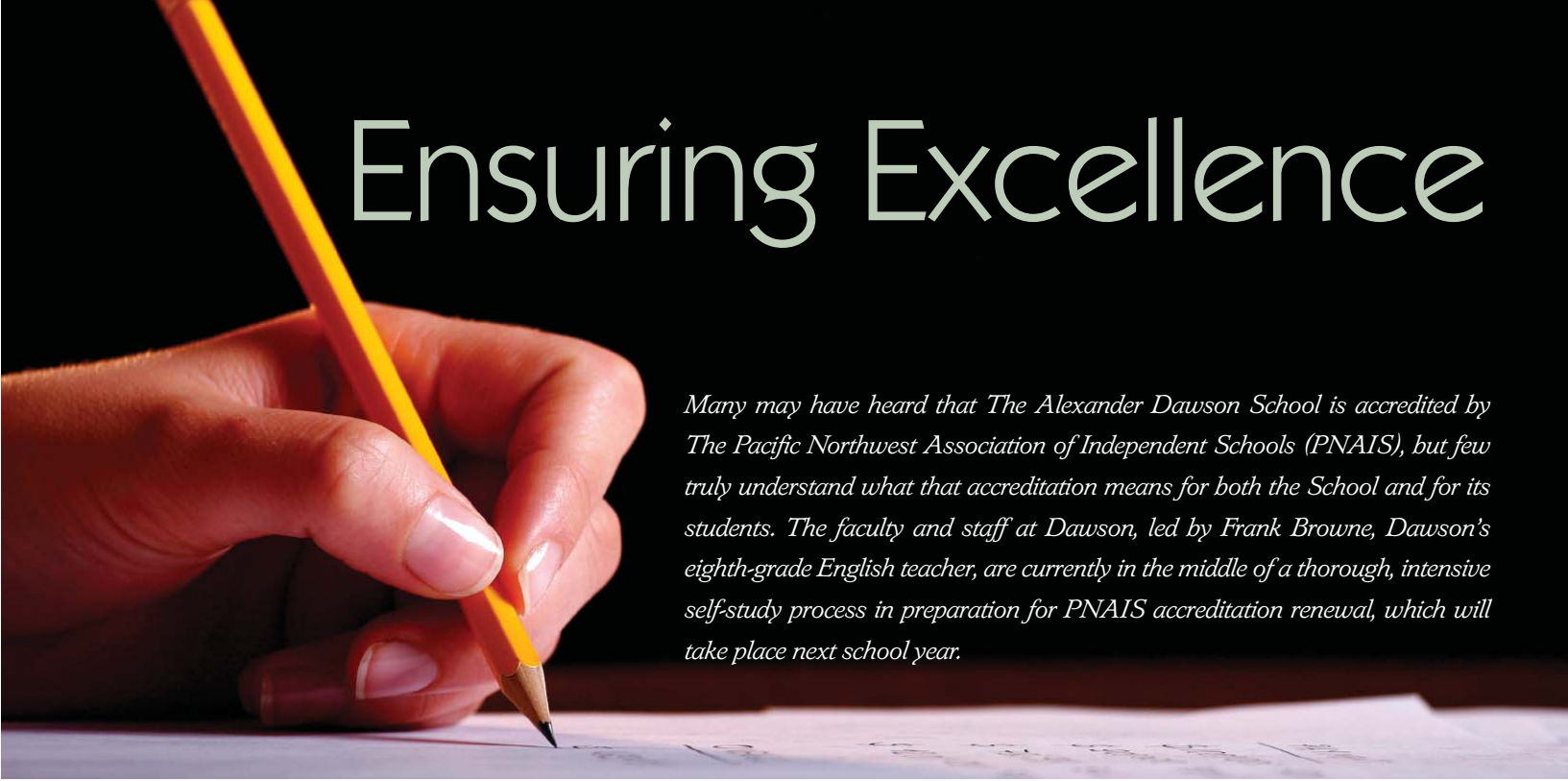


Michelle Okeke, 6th grade Character Education



Current Events class

Ensuring Excellence



Many may have heard that The Alexander Dawson School is accredited by The Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools (PNAIS), but few truly understand what that accreditation means for both the School and for its students. The faculty and staff at Dawson, led by Frank Browne, Dawson’s eighth-grade English teacher, are currently in the middle of a thorough, intensive self-study process in preparation for PNAIS accreditation renewal, which will take place next school year.

What is PNAIS, and what does accreditation mean for Dawson?

PNAIS is a voluntary membership organization of independent schools in eight northwestern states. Through an accreditation process, PNAIS ensures its members are meeting their missions while setting high standards regarding school management and operations. The School has made a voluntary commitment to achieving the highest level of excellence. In administering the accreditation process for independent schools, PNAIS recognizes programs for exceptional quality, while assisting schools with improvements. Accreditation of an institution by PNAIS indicates that it meets or exceeds the PNAIS Major Standards and Good Practices.

What are the benefits of accreditation?

In addition to promoting school improvement, there are many other benefits to accreditation. Accreditation assures parents and the community that Dawson is focused on providing a safe, enriching learning environment while maintaining efficient, effective operations. It also provides school leadership with an independent, non-governmental validation that the school is effectively delivering a quality educational experience. Further,

accreditation recognizes schools for going above and beyond the minimum to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to quality.

What is the self-study process, and why is it important?

The self-study, which Dawson faculty and staff have been working through for several months, is an intensive self-reflection that offers an opportunity to examine and evaluate the School in light of our mission and philosophy. The process involves all of the School’s various constituencies and provides guidance for future excellence, viability and sustainability. The final product of the self-study is a comprehensive document that outlines both the ways in which Dawson is fulfilling its mission and our self-identified strengths and weaknesses.

After the completion of the self-study, a peer group review team, made up of five to 15 educators from around the country and/or region, will visit the School to review all aspects of our programs and operations. The group will assess overall effectiveness in fulfilling our stated purposes, and they will create a report that includes observations, commendations, recommendations and suggestions to assist Dawson with improvement.



Vegas 2.0 team Michael Kwok, Stetson Alexander, Sabrina Close

Building Cities of The Future

*“I’m Mayor, Michael Kwok.” “I’m Engineer, Sabrina Close.” “I’m City Planner, Stetson Alexander.”
“And this,” said the group with a dramatic pause and a magical gesture, “is Vegas 2.0!”*

Dawson’s Vegas 2.0 team, composed of students Michael Kwok, Stetson Alexander and Sabrina Close, as well as teacher Camille McCue and mentor engineer, Dr. David James, represented the Las Vegas region in this year’s National Future Cities Competition in Washington, D.C. in February. Out of more than 1,100 teams competing at the regional level, Vegas 2.0 was one of only 39 teams chosen to compete in the national competition.

The team was awarded Best Essay and also won an award for Best Management of Water Resources, setting a precedent for the most awards ever won by a Las Vegas team since the competition’s inception 16 years ago.

McCue, advanced math and technology teacher, guides students throughout the semester, as they work in teams to build a computer model of a future city, research and write an

essay on a concept for a city 150 years into the future, build a 2’ x 4’ physical scale model from recycled materials, write a brief city narrative, and create and deliver a formal seven-minute presentation. Dr. James visited the students frequently to discuss their plans and ensure their thinking was grounded in authentic engineering practice. The theme for this year’s competition was to design green, low-income emergency housing for those rendered homeless as a result of economic or environmental disaster.

“Everything in Vegas 2.0 is actually based on research that is currently underway, meaning, everything we propose for the city is plausible and backed by scientific fact.”

Michael Kwok

could really see how their research can be applied to ‘real world’ situations.” She added, “Not only that, but Vegas 2.0 was the only team to use a real city in their presentation, while other teams made up cities for the future. This presented an even

larger challenge, as the team had to consider the existing infrastructure, economic base and geography of Las Vegas in building a city of the future.”

Vegas 2.0, which is a futuristic version of our hometown, depicts an infrastructure in which city planners have redesigned our city based on biomimicry, or using nature’s solutions to solve human problems. The city also institutes self-organization and self-repair. Vegas 2.0 envisions a future in which 10 million residents reside in mixed-use condo high rises around Fremont and in ziggurat live-work-play pyramids built beyond our current city limits.

Transit consists of below-ground MagLev, surface land ferries and an elevator leading to outerspace. Vegas 2.0 relies on green sources of energy, including solar, wind and biological batteries. Plumbing and building materials self-repair if damaged, similar to the human body’s healing process.

Because the community is multinational, Babelfish ear devices translate audio, and eye visors translate signage, so everyone hears and sees language in their native tongues.

Due to economic and environmental problems in California, an additional million residents migrated to Vegas 2.0 and live in comfortable emergency housing called the ARC (Accordion Residential Complex) constructed in Yucca Mountain, in tunnels never used for nuclear waste storage.

While the description of Vegas 2.0 sounds like an imaginative fantasy world, all concepts and mechanisms used within the city are based on scientific research. “Everything in Vegas 2.0 is actually based on research that is currently underway, meaning, everything we propose for the city is plausible and backed by scientific fact,” said Kwok.

Things like nuclear fusion for power, nano-carbon tubes for space elevators, three-dimensional printing with real cells to create working human organs, and accordion-style housing, are all real concepts or are currently in the research stage.

“These students are able to see the potential and build a city they may well witness within their lifetimes. It’s just amazing to see how innovative and inspired they are when brainstorming and then building their cities,” said James.



National judging

Highlights from the Regional Competition

Dawson teams swept the Regional Future Competition for the second year. Competing against 20 teams from Las Vegas, not only did Dawson’s Vegas 2.0 team win the competition, they also won a Best Scale Model Award, Best Presentation and Best Computer Model.

Dawson team, Red Planet Outpost, composed of Damien Horton, Ryan Chakmak and Robbie Netzorg, won a Best Scale Model Award, the Best Essay Award, and a special award for Best Use of Innovative Construction Materials and Techniques.

Dawson team, Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, composed of Evan Link, Andrew Poggione and Weston Bennett, won a Best Scale Model Award and a special award for Most Sustainable City.

Students competed against teams from Middle Schools throughout the Valley, including Burkholder Middle School, Cadwallader Middle School, Coral Academy of Science, Faith Lutheran Junior High School, Fremont Middle School, Hyde Park Middle School, Johnson Junior High School, Las Vegas Day School, Lied Middle School, Lyon Middle School, Mannion Middle School and Saint Viator Parrish School.



Artistic Kids

“When the children first walk into the art studio, it’s like being in a candy store,” said Barbara Katchen, ECEC studio art teacher. With so many colors, textures and materials to choose from, students are often overwhelmed and excited when they enter the art studio for the first time.

When Katchen first began teaching art more than 30 years ago, she worked with middle and high school students. Five years ago, she came to Dawson and has been building the studio art curriculum at the Early Childhood Education Center ever since. “I just love working with the children. They are like sponges. They are so eager to learn new things, and they are so perceptive,” said Katchen.

In studio art, the children focus on line, shape, color and texture. Students are introduced to these concepts by creating drawings, collages, sculptures, self-portraits and paintings.

Art helps young children develop fine motor skills, as well as verbal and critical thinking skills. Through discovery and exploration, individually, and in small groups, students create a variety of art works.

Through the studio art curriculum, students learn decision-making skills as they relate to art. They learn to recognize different kinds of lines and

(left) Maddie Harris, pre-k



Pre-school students with Mrs. Katchen (right to left) Carter Danz, Ryley Bach, Petra Morton, Gracie Buchmiller

shapes and to draw these lines and shapes independently.

“We don’t realize how many decisions children must make when they are creating art,” said Katchen. “This skill crosses into the classroom; as students see their decisions take shape in their art projects, they become more confident. This confidence allows them to begin trusting themselves when making decisions, no matter what the subject matter.”

During daily and weekly activities, students learn to demonstrate control when using a marker, pencil or paint brush. Katchen sees the growth of fine-motor skills in each student. “It is amazing how much they learn when

you compare them from the first day of school to the last,” she noted. Fine-motor skills are expanded as students learn to cut with scissors and begin gluing.

Students also learn about many famous artists and learn how to talk about and describe their artwork to others. While studying Vincent Van Gogh, students learn the concept of self-portraiture. They then put their lessons in action as they look into a mirror and recognize shapes within their own faces. This allows them to draw an accurate, proportional self-portrait.

“They really love the self-portrait unit,” said Katchen. “They enjoy discovering more about themselves, and you can



Rowan Gustafson, pre-k

see them intently studying their own faces and features so carefully before drawing each portion.”

Students begin to understand the concept of 3-dimension and recognize balance and repetition. They learn to use visual perception and visual discrimination when critiquing their own work and that of others.

“Children learn best through experimentation and exploration,” said Katchen, who will often show the children how to do something and then let them discover their own ways to create their masterpieces.

Students work with clay to make pinch pots and coil pots. Through the lessons, students learn a variety of techniques in working with clay, including scoring and slipping and applying glaze to projects.

As the year progresses, Katchen notices students connect previous art concepts to new ones. “It’s great to see them begin making the connections and begin working more independently,” she said.



Pre-k students with Mrs. Katchen (right to left) Chloe Chang, Mia Stipp, Jacob Stolyar, Wyatt Mathis

Alumni

JACK LEAVITT, class of '07



Jack Leavitt, 2010

“ I WAS WELCOMED BY MANY PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE TEACHERS AT DAWSON, AND I STILL KEEP IN CONTACT WITH A FEW OF THE TEACHERS TO THIS DAY. ”

Dawson alumnus, Jack Leavitt, completed his seventh and eighth grade years at Dawson, graduating in 2007. He remembers his first year at Dawson as an exciting experience.

“I made new friends, many of which I still have, even though we attend different high schools,” he said. “I was welcomed by many people, especially the teachers at Dawson, and I still keep in contact with a few of the teachers to this day.”

When he looks back on his time at Dawson, Jack’s fondest memories are of “Mr. Finrock’s photography class, where all of my classmates created beautiful photographs of the world around us.” He also

remembers his many conversations with Mr. Browne, who encouraged him to try pole vaulting.

Since graduating from Dawson three years ago, Jack has been working hard at Faith Lutheran Jr./Sr. High School, where he is a junior. “The transition to high school was not as bad as I had expected,” said Jack. “I assumed high school was going to be hard for me, and I wondered how I would find my way around a larger campus and how difficult the classes would be.”

Because only one other student from Jack’s eighth-grade class chose to attend Faith Lutheran, he knew he would have to make friends all over again. “Once I started high school, I made new friends, became



Seventh Grade, 2006



Eighth Grade, 2007

involved in various activities, and carried with me all that I learned from Dawson. I found it was actually easy to make the transition. My experience at Dawson prepared me well.” Jack credits the teachers and classes he took at Dawson with preparing him for the discipline required for high school.

Having experienced the transition to high school, Jack encourages Dawson’s eighth graders to choose a high school that is best for them, not based on where their friends are going. “Regardless of where you go, you will always make new friends.” He also encourages graduates to “constantly set goals and keep challenging yourself, no matter how hard high school turns out to be.”

Over the past several years, technology within Dawson’s classrooms has been raised to state-of-the art standards; however, when Jack graduated from Dawson, technology was not as utilized as it is now in the classrooms. “High school classes revolve around computer knowledge, including on-line books, laptop programs within schools, and keyboarding and programming basics,” he noted. “When I was at Dawson, I wish there had been more classes in the area of computers to prepare me for that.”

While Jack devotes much of his time to academics, he is also involved in many after-school and extracurricular activities. He participates on the school’s track team in pole vaulting, in which he hopes to beat the school record of 14 feet – his personal best is 13 feet, 6 inches. Jack is also a member of the school’s rock climbing club, and he volunteers for public speaking opportunities to promote the school. He also participates in the National High School Power Clean Championship, where he lifts up to 260 pounds.

Jack is enjoying high school, but there are a few things about Dawson that he misses. “I do miss the family-like nature of all the students and the caring faculty at Dawson. I knew I was always welcome to talk about anything I wanted to with my teachers, and they were always available to listen.”

With one year of high school left, Jack is beginning to narrow down his options for life after graduation. He aspires to be a nuclear engineer, hoping to either attend college or join the Navy in pursuit of his dream. “I believe the Navy would be my best option because I handle responsibility well, am very interested in a military career, and am a disciplined person by nature,” said Jack. “The Navy also offers special educational opportunities that can’t be found elsewhere, including specialized training on nuclear-powered ships,” he added.



Class of 2004

Elizabeth Wright: After Dawson, I went to Palo Verde High School and even though I really enjoyed high school life, I dearly missed all of the incredible experiences I was able to have at Dawson. I graduated from Palo Verde in ‘08 and now am in my second year at UNLV studying biology. It was very difficult for me to choose which field to go into, because Dawson had sparked so many interests in me, from music and writing to science. I have the teachers at Dawson to thank for helping me grow into the person I am proud of today. I will never forget all of the wonderful memories I was able to create at Dawson.

Class of 2005

Olivia Bioni: I graduated from Palo Verde High School in ‘09 with a High Honors Diploma and 4.8 weighted GPA overall. I starred as Hamlet in Hamlet my senior year. I was President of the International Thespian Society and Vice President of Crafts for Kids as well. I am currently attending Colgate University in Hamilton, NY, and am employed in the Africana and Latin American Studies Department. I plan on majoring in Biology and minoring in Theater.

Class of 2008

Kaleigh Myers: I attend Mercersburg Academy and am now a sophomore at the Pennsylvania boarding school. I am participating in the traveling performance of “The Stinky Cheese Man” as The Giant and am still to learning to walk on stilts for the part!

Josh Reisman: I am currently enrolled in The Meadows Upper School. During my freshman year at the Meadows, I completed both semesters with High Honors (GPA of over 3.85). As a sophomore, I plan to participate in baseball, basketball and student clubs such as Microbank, Young Progressives, etc. Next summer, I hope to travel to China on my eighth trip with People to People, as well as my second year of Debate Camp at the University of Michigan. My true passion lies in being a part of the debate program at The Meadows School. Throughout my freshman year, I made it to the “out rounds” of three debate tournaments (octafinals, quarterfinals and finals). Currently, my goal is to acquire a bid to the Tournament of Champions as a sophomore – the pinnacle of all high school debate competitions.

Interested in being listed in our Alumni Class Notes?

Visit www.alexanderdawsonschool.org and click the “Dawson Alumni” link under “About Dawson.” Your updates will be added to our website and published in the next *Petroglyph*.



Mrs. Kindon's 2nd grade class

Third-grade teacher, Linda Hudson, who is a member of the Nevada Geographic Alliance, was instrumental in bringing the map to Dawson.

"There are only two giant National Geographic North America maps in existence," said Hudson, "so it is quite remarkable that we were able to get one at Dawson. Every single Lower School student, from kindergarten through fourth grade, experienced the map."

Through a variety of activities, students learned geography through kinetic, auditory and visual methods, increasing their retention of information. "It was great to see them making connections between what we've learned in class all year and places they were able to 'travel to' on the map," said Hudson.

Marcie Parker, Lower School music teacher, integrated the map into her classroom instruction with kindergarten and first grade classes.

"Students found cardinal directions and explored the differences between land and water," said Parker. "They were given a land animal, sea creature or bird and had to journey to a specific place using these toys. They also enjoyed placing beanbags on their birthplaces," she added.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC'S

GIANT MAP

Dawson Lower School students recently had the opportunity to walk across the country – literally – as they experienced a giant National Geographic map of North America, brought to Dawson by the Nevada Geographic Alliance.

On the 26' x 34' map, students traversed the continent, from Alaska's Aleutian Islands to the Panama Canal, and from Greenland to Baja. Along the way, they used their bodies to represent physical features, went on a westward journey to track population growth, and played an action-packed game of "Simon Says" to locate various geographic locations.

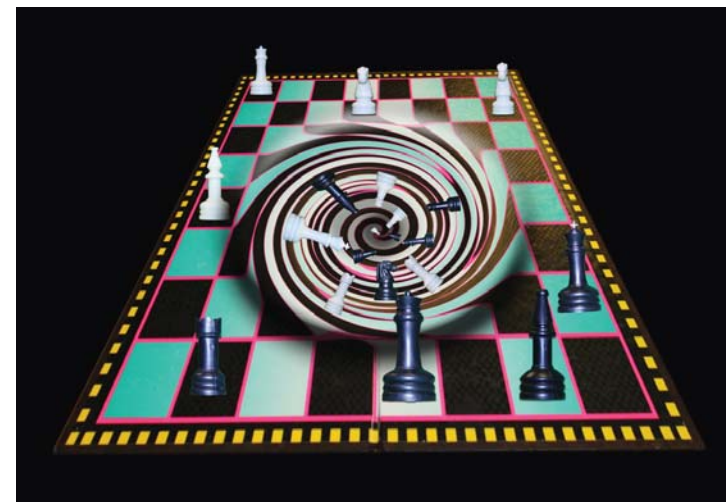
Student Portfolios



"Clouds," photograph taken by Michael Kwok, 8th grade, from an airplane



"Desert Landscape" by Catherine Yackira, 2nd grade



"Chess Board," digital manipulation by Joey Coronel, 5th grade



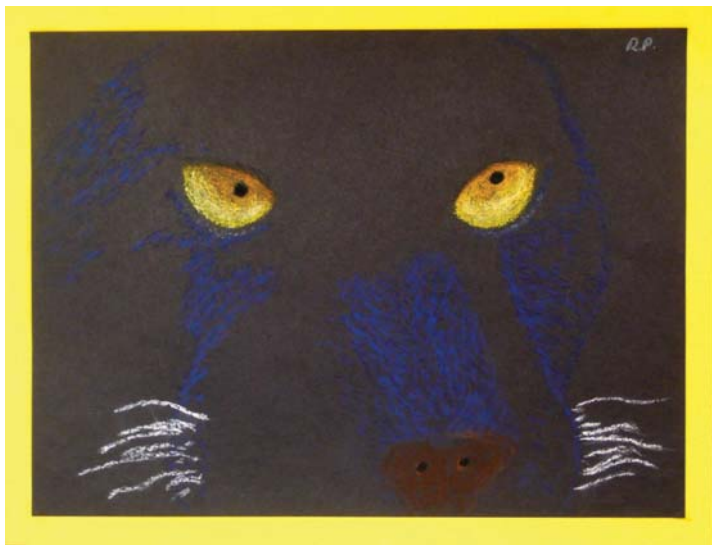
Glass mosaic bowl by Lara Findley, 8th grade



"Chinese New Year: Year of the Ox," by Makenna Bear, 3rd grade



Bird wood piece by Sarah Gaffin, 8th grade



A pastel drawing of a panther by Russell Posin, 8th grade



"Climbing Walls," original photo with no digital manipulation by Alex Desa, 8th grade



"Bugs In My Garden," by Landon Roeth, kindergarten



Self-portrait by Mia Stipp, pre-k



Self-portrait by Tobi Alabi, pre-k

D.C. Descriptive Essay
by Mattias Lederer, 8th grade

In the Holocaust Museum, Spencer and I waited for the elevator in suspense and fear for what was to come, and we jumped as the ping of the elevator arriving rang through the room as though the museum wanted to shatter the remaining courage we were trying to gather. We shuddered as an indescribable groan rumbled through our bodies while the gates of hell itself creaked open, exposing a small room that was a facsimile of the cells in which so many innocent people had to endure torture and confinement. Spencer and I shared a single thought entering the claustrophobic casket of an elevator, "Please don't close the door!" and with a clank everyone we knew was gone. We felt sick. We ascended slowly, watching a short video to prepare us for what we were going to see. Unfortunately, it didn't prepare us for what we were going to feel.

Finally the elevator opened. A rush of uncomfortably cozy, warm air billowed in as we gasped in shock, taking in the terrible pictures of people whose bodies were so emaciated and skeletal that we wondered how they could have overcome this starvation, survived, and returned to a normal life.

The pictures in the glass cases, which rose from floor to ceiling on a deep black wall, displayed the gruesome and unbearably sad photos of people; this created an overwhelming funeral sensation in me as I realized the enormity of what the innocent people endured. Not really wanting to remain among these souls who were killed by others who hated them for no reason, we hurried to the end of the room to the Hall of Names. This is a clear enclosed glass walkway going to the second building—millions of names of the dead are etched in the glass—and I remembered what a line of 11 million dead could look like as Stephen Nasser described it, but then he also reminded me that there were so many different kinds of people killed by the Nazis. The tunnel of etched glass—as it was raining outside—seemed to be weeping tears in sympathy with the people who lost their loved ones in the Holocaust.

The second floor really hit home for me because it was about children, and these little children did not know that that they would be enslaved, tortured, separated from their mothers and fathers, and finally killed; they drew happy little kid pictures of suns and smiles and houses and trees—something that they could never see again as they were taken away to their deaths. I cried.

I left thinking about two things: 1) Genocide is a terrible reoccurring tragedy in the world's history. 2) What kind of cold-hearted, brutal, merciless individuals and governments could do such a thing?



Pen and ink drawing of Koi by Jason Eng, 8th grade



"Metal Dolphin," by Lydia Costantian, 1st grade



"Doll Face," digital manipulation by Zach Wright, 8th grade



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Student Portfolios

TWELFTH NIGHT
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE!

WHAT COUNTRY, FRIENDS, IS THIS?

IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE, PLAY ON.

GOOD MADAM LET ME SEE YOUR FACE.

SHE HAS ABTURED THE SIGHT OF MEN.

...AND SOME HAVE GREATNESS THRUST UPON THEM!

I KNOW THIS LETTER WILL MAKE A FOOL

PAGE 2 OF 2

REMEMBER WHO COMMENDED THY YELLOW STOCKINGS!

WHAT MONEY, SIR?

I MUST ENTREAT OF YOU SOME OF THAT MONEY.

THIS IS VERY MIDSUMMER MADNESS!

AN APPLE, CLEFT IN TWO, IS NOT MORE TWIN THAN THESE TWO CREATURES.

BUT THAT'S ALL ONE, OUR PLAY IS DONE, AND WE'LL STRIVE TO PLEASE YOU EVERY DAY.

MRS. WRIGHT'S 5TH GRADE DRAMA CLASS

AMANDA	CAPRI	THOR
JOEY	CARLYN	JACOB
CLAIRE	SOPHIA	KIMMY
MICHAEL	HAILEY	JEMIMA
ALEC	ALEXANDER	BRITTANI
REAGAN	ADAM	MILLER