

BEAVER COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

**A  
TEACHER'S  
GUIDE TO  
LIFE AND  
WORK**



2011–12 Edition

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Prepared for the benefit of the faculty members of

Beaver Country Day School  
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"What we are after is an awakened consciousness, differing in each individual, an excitement in thinking, reading, and writing for their own sake, new discoveries, new enthusiasms, the casting off, or the retention with better understanding, of the old. What we want is to stimulate the love of mental adventure and constructive doubt, to create emotional satisfaction in the things of the mind, to reveal through books the variety and the wonder of human experience.

"How we do these things matters not at all. The numberless ways of their accomplishment reside in the numberless personalities of those of us who teach. The one thing that does matter is that we shall be awake and alive, alert and eager, flexible and unperturbed, likable and exciting."

—Mary Ellen Chase, *A Goodly Fellowship* (1939)



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# 1. SCHOOL VALUES AND ASPIRATIONS

## MISSION STATEMENT OF BEAVER COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL (2006)

Beaver Country Day School offers an academically challenging curriculum in an environment that promotes balance in students' lives. Deeply committed to individual student success, teachers inspire students to

- Reason and engage deeply with complex ideas and issues;
- Be intellectually curious, open-minded, and fair;
- Identify and build upon their strengths;
- Develop leadership and teamwork skills;
- Act effectively within a genuinely diverse cultural and social framework;
- Serve both school and society with integrity, respect, and compassion.

## CORE STANDARDS OF THE BEAVER COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL LEARNING EXPERIENCE (2003)

### 1. THE CAPACITY FOR MORAL REASONING—

- 1.1. as the basis of responsible living
- 1.2. in matters that cross boundaries of culture, age, gender, and ethnicity
- 1.3. in matters of personal, community, and global import
- 1.4. in matters of intellectual property, ideas, and personal creativity

### 2. THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY—

- 2.1. her or his own ideas, opinions, and reasoning process
- 2.2. in the mediums of writing, oral exposition, discussion, and artistic expression
- 2.3. across boundaries of culture, language, age, gender, expertise, and ethnicity
- 2.4. in forums and to audiences of a variety of sizes and purposes

### 3. RESPECT—

- 3.1. for the dignity and value of human life and work, including one's own
- 3.2. for the value of community, including the value of a multiculturally constructed world
- 3.3. for the sanctity of the natural world as an environment for all living things
- 3.4. for the persons, property, and creative and intellectual endeavors of others

**4. CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS—**

- 4.1. in personal relationships
- 4.2. in the context of her or his own community
- 4.3. in historical and global context
- 4.4. in such a way as to help bring people together across boundaries of difference

**5. INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER—**

- 5.1. in appreciating the value of hard work, of knowledge, of learning, of personal creativity, and of the life of the mind
- 5.2. in taking pride in responsibly meeting one's obligations as a member of a learning community
- 5.3. in developing an active interest in events, issues, and trends in the broader community and the world
- 5.4. in developing the ability to bring past learning and thoughtfully derived evidence to bear on new problems and issues and in support of ideas and assertions

**6. THE CAPACITY FOR CREATIVE AND FLEXIBLE PROBLEM-SOLVING—**

- 6.1. in embracing the challenge of complexity in intellectual, practical, and personal matters
- 6.2. in the ability to apply a variety of reasoning processes for the analysis of problems and for the synthesis of new approaches
- 6.3. in the ability to apply a variety of techniques and strategies for acquiring and applying information in the service of problem-solving
- 6.4. in maintaining an optimistic attitude when faced with a challenge or problem

**7. THE CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY—**

- 7.1. in matters relating to equity and social justice in the community, the nation, and the world
- 7.2. in matters relating to personable responsibility in the areas of intellectual property, ideas, and personal creativity
- 7.3. in service to the community at all levels
- 7.4. in personal relationships and in the expression of personal needs and concerns

**8. ACCESS TO SELF—**

- 8.1. in the areas of creativity and artistic expression
- 8.2. in understanding the ways in which she or he learns and understands
- 8.3. in the area of self-reflection
- 8.4. in her or his emotional and spiritual life

**9. THE CAPACITY FOR COLLABORATION AND LEADERSHIP—**

- 9.1. in academic and intellectual endeavors
- 9.2. in groups with varied membership and purposes
- 9.3. in the problem-solving process
- 9.4. in working toward community goals through action or service

## 10. THE VALUE OF WELLNESS—

- 10.1. through the expression of thought and feeling in movement, sport, and performance
- 10.2. in the ability to make informed choices in all areas of physical and emotional wellness
- 10.3. in valuing the understanding and expression of personal needs and self-interest
- 10.4. in valuing the capacity to share and process the concerns and needs of others in areas of personal choice and well-being

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING AT BEAVER

Over several years our faculty has worked to refine a definition of our goals as teachers, advisors, coaches, and mentors to students. As of the beginning of the 2003–04 school year, this description of Effective Teaching at Beaver helps define and direct our aspirations as teachers.

### *A BEAVER TEACHER WILL STRIVE TO*

#### 1. MAINTAIN A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH INDIVIDUAL LEARNING STYLES AND COGNITIVE, EMOTIONAL, AND CREATIVE CAPACITIES ARE HONORED

##### *The teacher*

- 1.1. understands and applies information from the learning profiles of individual students
- 1.2. is developing a working understanding of cognitive theory, including multiple intelligence theory
- 1.3. is developing a working understanding of ways to address different learning styles and to accommodate learning difficulties of the types encountered among Beaver students
- 1.4. uses multiple ways of presenting material
- 1.5. uses multiple means of assessing student knowledge and understanding
- 1.6. makes appropriate use of technology in presenting, analyzing, and assessing understanding of material

#### 2. MAINTAIN A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE PERSONAL AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCE OF EACH STUDENT IS HONORED

##### *The teacher*

- 2.1. is developing a working understanding of the principles of equity pedagogy
- 2.2. is developing an understanding of the ways in which cultural and personal experience can affect expectations for and ways of learning
- 2.3. is working to learn as much as possible about the personal interests and experiences of students

#### 3. SET CLEAR STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

##### *The teacher*

- 3.1. presents overall course expectations clearly and explicitly through the course prospectus
- 3.2. presents unit expectations clearly and explicitly through the use of essential questions, stated performance expectations, etc.
- 3.3. presents expectations for daily work clearly through the use of explicit and well-written assignments, evaluation rubrics, and explicitly stated standards

- 3.4. provides timely and adequate feedback to students regarding their progress toward meeting those standards and expectations
- 3.5. is aware of and applies the highest developmentally appropriate subject matter standards, as determined departmentally or externally (e.g., Advanced Placement, SAT II)

#### **4. MAINTAIN A DISCIPLINED AND PRODUCTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE**

##### *The teacher*

- 4.1. displays effective classroom management on a daily basis
- 4.2. has a developmentally appropriate classroom manner that includes each student in her or his own learning process
- 4.3. uses a variety of pedagogical methods to increase class responsibility for the learning process
- 4.4. demonstrates, in observation or anecdotally,
  - 4.4.1. respect for students
  - 4.4.2. appropriate use of humor
  - 4.4.3. that s/he is perceived as fair and open by students and parents

#### **5. BE COMMITTED TO HELPING STUDENTS SEE AND UNDERSTAND ISSUES FROM MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES**

##### *The teacher*

- 5.1. selects materials or classroom examples that cross disciplinary lines in terms of content or skills
- 5.2. selects materials that allow students to make meaning in multiple ways
- 5.3. selects materials and classroom examples that acknowledge complexity and ambiguity in a developmentally appropriate way

#### **6. MAINTAIN A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH COLLABORATION AND PURPOSEFUL EFFORT ARE EXPECTED**

##### *The teacher*

- 6.1. selects pedagogical methods and creates problems or projects that require collaboration
- 6.2. organizes and monitors the collaborative process to promote both learning and personal growth
- 6.3. provides feedback that acknowledges effort and guides students toward greater efficacy in their efforts to learn

#### **7. BE AN EXPERT AND PASSIONATE PARTICIPANT IN HER OR HIS SUBJECT AREA**

##### *The teacher*

- 7.1. has appropriate educational background or experience to be an effective teacher in the subject area
- 7.2. maintains professional memberships, subscriptions, etc. that allow her or him to keep current in relevant subject matter areas
- 7.3. participates in professional development activities to further knowledge and awareness in relevant subject matter areas

#### **8. BE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO EXPANDING HER OR HIS OWN KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE AND TO THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN**

##### *The teacher*

- 8.1. has appropriate educational background or experience to be an effective teacher
- 8.2. maintains appropriate professional memberships, subscriptions, etc. that allow her or him to keep current in matters of pedagogy, curriculum, and child development
- 8.3. maintains an appropriate level of knowledge in the appropriate and effective use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning
- 8.4. participates in professional development activities to further knowledge and awareness of pedagogy, curriculum, and child development
- 8.5. makes a demonstrable effort to involve herself or himself with the ongoing development of the school's educational program
- 8.6. makes a demonstrable effort to involve herself or himself with activities and events in the life of the school and its students

## **9. CONTRIBUTE IN MEANINGFUL WAYS TO THE NONACADEMIC LIFE OF STUDENTS AND OF THE SCHOOL**

### *The teacher*

- 9.1. participates effectively in an appropriate number of non-academic activities involving students
- 9.2. participates as needed in professional development activities to improve effectiveness in these areas
- 9.3. *(if applicable)* fully and appropriately carries out her or his responsibilities as advisor

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR BEAVER, 2011–2014**

*Adopted by the Board Of Trustees, April 2011*

This is an extraordinary time to be in education. Our rapidly changing, complex, highly connected world demands skills and competencies that go well beyond mastery of content. Beaver Country Day School is deeply committed to providing educational experiences that inspire students to become innovators, entrepreneurs, and creative problem-solvers who will succeed and lead in a new era.

### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PRIORITIES

A Beaver education will include both a solid grounding in fundamental knowledge and skills as well as the capabilities needed for the advanced understanding, analysis, and solution of complex real-world problems. Extraordinary teaching and student faculty relationships are integral to this.

## **1. INTEGRATION OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY, COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS THAT STRESS CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING AND INNOVATION INTO LEARNING, TEACHING, AND CURRICULUM**

- Beaver will demonstrate the efficacy of the studio model in teaching students to learn more creatively and adaptively and present more effectively.
- Beaver will create a framework for middle school students to experience complex, collaborative, multidisciplinary, hands-on projects
- Beaver will encourage students to pursue independent research focused on solving real world problems throughout the greater Boston community and beyond.

## **2. ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE SCIENCES**

- Beaver will adapt its science program in grades 6 through 12 to respond to rapid developments in the sciences and maximize the potential of its new facilities
- Beaver faculty will design a curriculum that combines traditional scientific disciplines to better reflect how science is used in the real world and will offer all students courses in new, convergent sciences such as nanotechnology, biotechnology, engineering, and robotics
- Beaver science faculty will experience professional development to assist them in designing and delivering best-in-class curriculum in both conventional and convergent science
- Beaver will continue to develop and strengthen its relationships with scientific experts and leaders in the new knowledge and practices that have the capacity to improve learning.
- Beaver will ensure its facilities are regularly updated to maintain state-of-the-art status.

## **3. ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN LANGUAGES**

- Beaver will improve its offerings, curricula, and instruction in the languages to best meet the needs and interests of all students and develop a comprehensive and consistent philosophy on language study
- Beaver will provide professional development to build the language faculty's capacities in designing and delivering best-in-class curricula
- Beaver will align language study with ongoing work in civic engagement and global awareness through professional and program development and through strategic partnerships

## **4. EXPANDING FACULTY CAPACITY TO APPLY EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES TO ENHANCE LEARNING**

- Beaver will demonstrate how teaching with technology elevates student performance in writing, analysis, presentation, communication, and collaboration
- Beaver will continue to develop and strengthen relationships with experts and leaders on emerging technologies that have the capacity to enhance learning
- Beaver will provide ongoing faculty development to integrate technology into teaching in a superior manner

## **5. INTEGRATION OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INTO LEARNING, TEACHING, AND CURRICULUM**

- Beaver will identify and pursue targeted, substantive partnerships with organizations on whose work our students' participation will have a measurable impact while inspiring them to engage deeply with and rethink their place in the world
- Beaver will continue to emphasize genuine engagement with real-world issues and problems as part of classroom teaching and curriculum across all disciplines and grades

### *STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PRIORITIES*

Beaver will tell its story in words and actions that match the excellence of its programs and student experience.

**1. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN.** Beaver will develop a comprehensive communications plan incorporating multiple media and platforms and based on clear, consistent language to tell its story in ways that serve the requirements of all functions in the school (administrative, academic, advancement and athletic) and is responsive to all audiences.

**2. ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP.** Beaver will establish itself as a thought-leading institution through expanded presentation and publication of the most outstanding and innovative work by Beaver faculty and staff and by sponsorship of programs to support the advancement of teaching and learning.

**3. SCHOOL CULTURE.** Beaver will clearly articulate high expectations for personal behavior and hold all members of the community accountable for a commitment to academic endeavor and authentic engagement with the community.

**4. VISITOR EXPERIENCE.** Beaver will ensure that it communicates in every way the excellence of its programs and student experience to all the audiences it interacts with in whatever capacity.

#### FINANCIAL RESOURCE PRIORITIES

Beaver will need to significantly increase its financial capabilities to achieve the priorities we have articulated above and meet the needs of our students, teachers and programs.

**DEVELOPMENT OF FINANCIAL PLAN.** Beaver will develop a detailed plan of financial priorities to present to the community that addresses program development, faculty development, improved communication, and the integration of civic engagement into learning, teaching and the curriculum.



## 2. CALENDARS

### MAJOR CALENDAR DATES, 2011–12

August 29–September 2, 2011	Preseason Practice for <b>Upper School Teams</b>
August 31, 2011	Orientation for <b>9th-grade Students and Parents</b> & New <b>Upper School Students</b>
September 1, 2011	Orientation for new <b>Middle School</b> students and parents
September 5, 2011	Labor Day – School Closed
September 6, 2011	Classes Begin
September 8–9, 2011	Class Orientation Events
September 26, 2011	Upper School Curriculum Night
September 29, 2011	Rosh Hashanah – School Closed
October 4, 2011	Middle School Curriculum Night
October 10, 2011	Fall Weekend – School Closed
October 20–21, 2011	No Classes – Parent/Teacher Conferences
November 18, 2011	Thanksgiving Break Begins – MS 1:40 P.M. US 2:15 P.M.
November 21–23, 2011	Faculty Work Days
November 28, 2011	Classes Resume
December 20, 2011	Winter Break Begins – MS 1:40 P.M. US 2:15 P.M.
January 4, 2012	Classes Resume
January 16, 2012	Martin Luther King Day – School Closed
February 20, 2012	Presidents Day – School Closed
February 21, 2012	Faculty Professional Day – No Classes
March 9, 2012	Spring Break Begins – MS 1:40 P.M. US 2:15 P.M.
March 26, 2012	Classes Resume
April 16, 2012	Patriots’ Day – School Closed
May 28, 2012	Memorial Day – School Closed
June 8, 2012	8th Grade Promotion and Final Assembly
June 10, 2012	Commencement at 2:00 P.M.
June 13, 2012	Final Faculty Meetings

## THE MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHEDULE GRID

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
8:00 Faculty Meeting	8:00	8:00	8:00	8:00
9:00	8:50	8:50	8:50	8:50
9:00	8:50	8:50	8:50	8:50
9:50	9:40	9:40	9:40	9:40
9:50	9:40	9:40	9:40	9:40
10:40	Advisor Mtg 10:10	Advisor Mtg 10:00	Advisor Mtg 10:05	Advisor Mtg 10:00
10:40	MS Morning Mtg 10:10	ELECTIVES 10:00	All-school Mtg 10:10	ELECTIVES 10:10
10:40	10:40	10:40	10:35	10:40
10:40	10:40	10:40	10:40	10:40
11:30	11:30	11:30	11:30	11:30
MS Lunch	MS Lunch	MS Lunch	MS Lunch	MS Lunch
12:00	12:00	12:00	12:00	12:00
12:00	12:00	12:00	12:00	12:00
12:50	12:50	12:50	12:50	12:50
12:50	12:50	12:50	12:50	12:50
1:40	1:40	1:40	1:40	1:40
1:50	1:50	1:50	1:50	1:50
2:55	2:55	Afternoon Activities (sports & the arts) 2:55	2:55	2:55
		Snack		
3:05	3:05	3:05 Study Hall (extra help, tutoring, music lessons)	3:05	3:05
3:40	3:40	3:40	3:40	3:40

## THE UPPER SCHOOL SCHEDULE GRID

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Faculty Meeting</b> 9:00	8:00	8:00	8:00	8:00
9:05		9:00		9:00
10:05		<b>Advisee Meeting</b> 9:30 9:35		<b>Class Meeting</b> 9:30 9:35
<b>Advisee Meeting</b> 10:35	10:05	10:05	10:05	10:05
10:40	<b>Tuesday Forum</b>		<b>All-School Meeting</b> 10:35	
11:40	10:40		10:40	
11:45	11:40	11:40	11:40	11:40
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Study Hall</b>	<b>US Art</b>	<b>Club Block</b>
12:15	12:15	12:15	12:15	12:15
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Study Hall</b>	<b>US Art</b>	<b>Club Block</b>
12:45	12:45	12:45	12:45	12:45
<b>US Lunch</b> 1:15	<b>US Lunch</b> 1:15	<b>US Lunch</b> 1:15	<b>US Lunch</b> 1:15	<b>US Lunch</b> 1:15
1:15	1:15	1:15	1:15	1:15
2:15	2:15	2:15	2:15	2:15
<b>10 minutes</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>
2:25	2:25 X Block	2:25 X Block	2:25 X Block	2:25 X Block
3:25	3:25	3:25	3:25	3:25
3:40	3:40	3:40	3:40	3:40
<b>After School Activities</b>				
3:40-5:30	3:40-5:30	3:40-5:30	3:40-5:30	3:40-5:30



### 3. ESPECIALLY FOR NEW FACULTY

#### CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO NEW FACULTY

*(may be supplemented as needed)*

July 7–8	Tech Orientation and Google training, 8:30–12:00
Monday, August 22– Friday, August 26	Introduction to Life @Beaver, 8:00–4:00 <i>(includes tech training if needed)</i>
Wednesday, August 24	New Faculty BBQ, 5:00 at Beaver <i>(spouses, Significant Others, children invited)</i>
Monday, August 29– Thursday, September 1	Full Faculty meetings, 8:00–3:30
Wednesday, August 31	Orientation for students and parents/guardians new to the Upper School, 6:15; <i>attendance required for those who teach or advise students in grades 9 and 10</i>
Wednesday, September 1	Orientation for students new to the Middle School, 12:15; ice cream social for parents/guardians new to the Middle School, 3:15; <i>attendance required for middle school faculty</i>

#### SERVICES YOU WILL NEED, AND A FEW WORDS TO THE WISE

Here are answers to some questions you might have about Beaver culture and your basic teacherly needs:

- **Parking.** Make sure you get a parking sticker from the Upper School Dean of Students—this won't guarantee you anything, but it will help identify your car in case of need.
- **“Your” classroom.** This may or may not be YOUR classroom; many teachers share. You should “decorate” in some tasteful way; some supplies for this are available in the school store. If you share a room, your influence on décor should be more or less proportional to your use level. Be tidy, and expect to use the faculty room or a department office as your work area if you are among the many teachers who “hot desk” classrooms. The carrels in the Library make great “hiding” spaces to correct papers uninterrupted.
- **Coffee and snacks.** Coffee and hot water for tea or cocoa are available in the faculty room and the dining room. The dining room coffee machine also tends to be on for most of the day.

The dining room serves cereal, toast, and fruit in the morning and has some grazing snacks available during much of the day. If the dining room's main doors are closed, teachers may use the kitchen door immediately to the left of the main entrance. If the staff looks super-busy or frazzled, come back later.

There are a couple of Starbucks within a short drive from school. Sign out and tell someone if you leave campus.

- **Lunch.** Lunch is available in the dining room every day. Teachers may enter through the kitchen starting shortly after 11:00 (this is the quiet time); student mealtime is 11:30 through the start of the first Upper School afternoon class at 1:15. There is a salad bar, and there is a vegetarian entrée each day. *Always bus your dishes.*

At some point you will be asked to monitor a lunch period. Circulate, be genial, and remind students to use trays and to clean up after themselves. The Deans can give you a more precise knowledge of the ground rules, but civility and neatness are the heart of it. Upper School folks are asked to do a parking lot-to-front circle lap once during their duty; a peek down Woodland Road is also in order.

- **Exercise.** Faculty members have been known to go for a run during a free period or at the end of the day. Sign out if you go during the day. The fitness equipment in the Athletic Center is accessible to teachers during afternoon program time. If you would like to try to make a special arrangement, see the Director of Athletics.

Some reductions in health-club membership costs are available through some portions of the Beaver health care plan; see the business office for details.

- **Health care.** If you need aspirin, acetaminophen, or the like during the school day, check with the nurse, who is in residence between 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. At other times, inquire in the Registrar's office.

A certified athletic trainer is on the staff who may be able to offer some advice when not engaged with students.

In the event of a medical emergency, in the absence of the nurse notify an administrator IMMEDIATELY and arrange to have emergency services (911) notified if this is warranted. Teachers should not move or transport an injured student. **See the protocol for contacting 911 in the *Employee Handbook*.**

Coaches will receive special instructions regarding medical situations that may arise during practices and games.

The use of the school's Epi-pens (for serious allergic reactions) and automatic defibrillator will be explained by the nurse.

- **Snow days and delayed starts.** Beaver does NOT use a phone tree or another active method of informing faculty, staff, and students of school closings or delays related to weather. News of such occurrences is immediately posted on the school website ([www.bcdschool.org](http://www.bcdschool.org)) and on the email and phone systems, but you can also check the local television news stations and their websites.

**For those who would like to receive notification directly, several local radio/television stations offer a service that will send a text message to your cell phone. Sign ups:**

**WHDH**     <http://www3.whdh.com/stormforce/closingbell.php>

**WCVB**     <http://www.thebostonchannel.com/closings/index.html>

Individual experience may vary, but it might be wise to sign up for both services, as there are known to have been occasional system lapses (the stations', not Beaver's).

- **Mail, phone calls, and faxes.** All teachers have mailboxes in the faculty room, and the mail is delivered daily Monday through Friday. It will pile up on long weekends and vacations, but

service is reliable in all ways. If you have outgoing mail, there are boxes in the mail room adjacent to the Receptionist's office. We can't expect the school to meter our letters, but you can make arrangements to send UPS or FedEx packages from school; if sending a personal FedEx, make sure it is clear that you are sending it as personal and the business office will track you down when the invoice comes in. Incidentally, neither FedEx nor UPS nor the Postal Service delivers to Beaver when school is closed, so plan accordingly if you are expecting something urgent.

You have a voicemail address, and you should set your message and then plan to check voicemail at least daily on school days; the Tech Department can configure your voicemail to forward to your school e-mail. Remember, 24 school-day hours is the promised response time to families.

The school fax number is 617-738-2701. You can send outgoing faxes in the mail room; be sure to use the log. Incoming faxes will find their way into your mailbox in the regular sorting of snail mail, so if you are expecting an urgent fax let the receptionist know and s/he will try to make sure you learn of its arrival sooner rather than later. *Because faxes have to travel through the building in the normal course of their arriving in your hands, do not assume that contents will be confidential.*

- **Events.** You will be invited to certain events during the school year, and other events will beckon. Few Beaver events outside the school day are “command performances.” You can always ask around to find out the protocol for attendance.

There are events you will want to attend: plays or performances that involve your advisees or many of your students; some athletic events—it is nice to see your advisees and students play at least once during each season; whatever the current year's incarnation of the “HarvestFest” is; art show openings involving advisees or students; the end-of-the-year party at the Head's house, which includes the “official” farewells to departing faculty and staff.

Other events—parties, parent-run evening events—are optional, although if you are a “key” person you might be expected to appear at certain ones. Spouses and significant others are almost always welcome at non-school day events, but there is no expectation of attendance.

- **Forms.** There is a supply of various forms in the faculty room, the Division Coordinator's Office, the Business Office—and online. If you need a form that is not there or wonder whether there might be a form for some particular purpose, check with the Divisions Coordinator, the business office, your division director, or the Registrar.
- **Teaching supplies.** Your department chair will regularly take an inventory (either once a month or once a term) of department needs and place the order with The Office People, Beaver's recommended vendor. The Business Office will then review the order, charge the departmental account and follow up should questions emerge. Once materials arrive, the department chair will distribute and/or store the materials.

Administrative offices are encouraged to follow a similar protocol, though it is acceptable to work with other vendors with whom the office has had successful interactions.

- **Technology.** Teachers may sign out LCD projectors from the Library. Flip video cameras are available from your department or (for Middle School teachers) from the Middle School director.

*If you have a classroom activity involving technology, it is IMPERATIVE that you requisition needed equipment in a timely fashion, and the WISE teacher plans some kind of “tech rehearsal” to make sure that any classroom technology functions as planned. This is especially true if student-provided technology is being used.* Remember

that Macs may require a special adaptor to work with the school's LCD projectors, and Mac owners should plan to supply such adaptors on their own.

Such items as overhead projectors and TV-*cum*-VCR/DVD units tend to be available by neighborhood within the building. See your department head if what you need is not readily available.

The school will provide you with a laptop computer.

- **Help Desk.** Technology help is available in person at the Help Desk located in the Middle School (west) wing, 2nd floor. It is staffed Monday through Friday from 7:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. You may also request assistance via email at [helpdesk@bcdschool.org](mailto:helpdesk@bcdschool.org) or [techsupport@bcdschool.org](mailto:techsupport@bcdschool.org). Service tends to be very quick.

Technical help can also be found on the Beaver Technology Learning Space website <<http://sites.bcdschool.org/techguide>>. This includes instructions on Google Apps, making a podcast, making a movie or a presentation, adding printers, etc.

- **Maintenance services.** Maintenance requests—regarding breakage, light-bulb replacement, and set-up requests for events, typically—should be made using the green Request for Maintenance Services sheets available in the faculty room. The Divisions Coordinator can be helpful with this.

In a maintenance emergency, the Receptionist's office has the capacity to contact members of the Buildings & Grounds staff at any time.

- **The BiblioTech—the facility formerly known as the library.** Think of the BiblioTech as a real ACADEMIC resource. The very knowledgeable library staff are eager to help teachers with almost anything with regard to curriculum and research; don't be shy about asking them for help. They will also happily provide orientation to your student as well as great and very specific instruction in the research process.

*Do NOT, however, use the Library space as a place to send unsupervised students or as a generic destination for students on days when you are absent. Groups of students must be supervised by the sending teacher.*

- **Building nomenclature.** We should try to be consistent among ourselves as to what we call the spaces on our campus.

The main gymnasiums, **Gym A** (newer) and **Gym B** (older) are located in the *Athletic Center*. (The Green Gym in the basement of the main classroom building is still the Green Gym.)

The new-ish arts facility is officially the *Visual and Performing Arts Center*, known as the VEE-pack (VPAC). The terrace at its lower level, north side, is the **Alex Cohn Terrace**, named for a member of the Class of 2007 who died in the spring of his senior year.

The large terrace or plaza near the entrance to the Athletic Center is the **Bloomberg Terrace**, named in honor of a family whose two children graduated from Beaver.

- **Field trips and transportation of students.** Teachers planning a field trip should plan far ahead. There is a Field Trip Request form available in the faculty room.

In general, plan field trips to coincide with your class and surrounding free or community time; students should not be asked to miss classes for field trips. Your department head can help you plan effective trips.

Students can be transported for field trips either in chartered buses (see the Divisions Coordinator to arrange) or Beaver activity vans. Teachers wishing to use a Beaver van should make arrangements to receive the prerequisite training, and they must have a valid Massachusetts driver's license. Arrangements for driver training can be made through the business office; it takes about two hours. The vans can transport one driver and 14 passengers ONLY.

Students may be driven in a teacher's car, although teachers should be aware that their own insurance obtains in such situations. Caution is recommended when transporting students, and all laws regarding seat-belt use, etc., must be observed scrupulously. If you are not comfortable doing it, don't.

It is not unusual to ask students to take the T on a field trip. The teacher will need to make sure that students have correct fares for inbound and outbound travel; the Chestnut Hill T stop is about a ten-minute walk from school. *Be aware of the cash requirements for purchasing T tickets. Ticket machines do not dependably make change at unmanned stops, like Chestnut Hill.*

On any off-campus excursion, remind students that they represent the school and that school rules apply—all the things your teachers told you. If you want to set some ground rules—and you should—inform students before the trip begins. Have students stay together on any trip, and count them often. If you don't have a cell phone, borrow one (see the business office) and make sure you have the school phone numbers at hand.

- **Odds and ends you should know:**

- The Beaver benefits program includes partner benefits.
- You can send a student to the nurse's office between 10 and 2, but no student should be allowed to leave school for health reasons without being processed through the Nurse's or the Registrar's office—a parent must be notified (except in the cases of seniors with valid off-campus privileges).
- The building opens early in the morning—you can be at work by six—and stays open into the evening. There are frequent evening events that last until after nine. A cleaning crew works in the building in the late afternoon and early evening. On weekends just before the end of a term the building is sometimes opened so teachers can work.
- Wherever possible and always with "official" mailings or publications, no document should leave the building for family or public consumption without its having been carefully proofread. There are preferred and official formats as well as official fonts for certain kinds of documents. Check with the Communication Office if you need guidance. Several individuals in the building are skilled proofreaders; start in the Development Office if you need help.

*As a corollary, e-mails to families or that otherwise represent the school should conform to standard usage with regard to capitalization and punctuation; professionalism matters.*

- If something is going on with a student that makes you worried or uncomfortable with regard to behavior or comments about family or social life, take your concerns to a member of the counseling department *as soon as possible; if the issue represents possible danger to the student or others, do this IMMEDIATELY.*

If you a student seems to be asking you to be his or her therapist, do NOT take on that role, and check in with a counselor as soon as possible.

## **A WALK THROUGH A YEAR AT BEAVER**

### **AUGUST/Pre-classes**

- Check on status of textbook orders with department head; rush order texts if necessary
- Complete any summer reading for iL@B and opening meetings
- Complete any summer reading assigned to students in your courses
- As soon as contact information is available, phone advisees and families to introduce yourself
- Start setting up your classroom—boards, borders—whatever décor seems appropriate
- Obtain classroom keys from department head

### **SEPTEMBER/early Fall**

- First “weeks” of classes interrupted by photos, orientation events—lots of “getting to know you”
- Prepare course prospectus for each course
- “No-Homework” nights may occur—first night of Rosh Hashanah; Yom Kippur
- College representatives on campus to meet students during middle (“lunch”) and X blocks; may create occasional conflicts for students
- “Curriculum Night” for Upper School—prepare as necessary

### **OCTOBER/mid Fall**

- “Curriculum Night” for Middle School—prepare as necessary
- Seniors will be off visiting colleges, missing some class days
- Progress Reports—arrange tutorial
- College recommendations for seniors should be wrapped up
- Harvest Fest, a Saturday
- Observations for evaluation begin in earnest
- Parent Conferences—prepare and organize materials, check schedule updates regularly
- Athletic early releases begin; these cascade after the time change from DST to EST in November
- Senior Halloween—special schedule for seniors; by tradition, only senior students wear costumes, although faculty may also do so
- Anticipate the end of Term I when planning assignments and assessments; try not to bury your students or yourself at the end of the term

### **NOVEMBER/late Fall**

- Admission tour season begins in earnest—be prepared for brief drop-in visits
- November 1 and 15 are Early Decision application due dates for many colleges—stressed seniors
- Committee of Teachers meets on Election Day—comments or queries to the Dean of Faculty in advance
- Some Varsity fall teams may be in New England or other tournaments
- Upper School and Middle School plays can mean stressed students, extension requests—be firm but humane; faculty should make a point of attending
- Cum Laude is a dress-up day; special assembly

- Be alert for special schedules
- Some Upper School winter sports begin practice
- Grandparents and Friends Day means a dog-and-pony show for classes during the visit times; check the schedule and the list of names
- Senior grades are due before any others—*this is extremely urgent, so be ready!*
- Grades and comments due the day before Thanksgiving—arrange tutorial if needed
- Monday–Wednesday of week before Thanksgiving are Faculty Work Days—no classes, may work at home or elsewhere, but grades and comments must be completed on time
- Use Faculty Work Days to prepare for new courses that begin Term II—materials, prospectus
- Fall NuVu students arrive back on campus; help them adjust to the school routine

### **DECEMBER/between Thanksgiving and December Break**

- Term II begins after Thanksgiving break
- First week after Thanksgiving involves comment correction and roll call meetings
- Winter sports and afternoon programs begin
- Three very swiftly flowing weeks
- Begin to be alert for snow days—notification via radio, TV, or Internet only; several local news outlets offer ways of setting up automatic school-closing messages to your cell phone
- Plan curriculum so units or projects end at start of December Break
- Some faculty absences for NAIS People of Color Conference (“PoCC”)
- Students hear from Early Decision/Early Action schools—agony and ecstasy
- Be alert for special schedules
- Try to arrange work to minimize your own homework over break
- Upper School courses may assign some work over break
- Sixth-grade Biggest Dig Project breaks ground
- Holiday Hoops and other holiday-related events of a musical and multicultural nature

### **JANUARY/early Winter**

- The long, dark days of winter begin; dreams of snow days begin
- Upper School Parent Conference day—prepare and organize materials, check schedules
- “No Homework” night for juniors on College Night
- Progress Reports due for all students in NEW Upper School courses and for all students in continuing at risk or about whom specific information needs to be shared
- Try to get some exercise, find opportunities to be out in sunlight
- Beaver athletic events are cheap entertainment
- Eighth-grade Creative Scholars Project revs up

### **FEBRUARY/mid Winter**

- A busy, busy month—brace yourself!
- Be alert for special schedules
- The end of Term II looms—schedule projects and assignments so as not to bury yourself or your students at the very end of the term

- Numerous student performances—Upper School play, Middle School musical, Advanced Drama play, Winter Concert—mean lots of rehearsals and student stress; faculty should try to attend some of these—see your advisees, at the least
- Evaluation process ends with reports given to evaluated teachers
- Winter Carnival will involve faculty grade affiliates on a Friday afternoon
- Professional Day means no classes and some interesting workshops
- Eighth-grade Creative Scholars Project presentations run across a couple of days
- Upper School: Be ready to devote a few days to review for final assessments; introduce no new material during last few days before final assessments; students will crave “review sheets;” examinations should be written a week in advance

### **MARCH/between end of Term II and Spring Break**

- The worst of winter is over, but a couple of long weeks lie between you and vacation
- Winter sport tournaments may come in the middle of this
- Set aside time for grades and comments as well as preparing for Term III courses
- *Senior grades are due before others—be ready!*
- First week after exams involves comment correction and roll call meetings
- Term III begins
- Winter NuVu students return to campus; help them re-adjust
- Spring sports and afternoon programs begin
- Plan curriculum so units or projects end at start of Spring Break; make this a week of real work—don’t give up!
- Service or other trips may have some students leaving early
- Some admitted students may choose to visit—be prepared

### **LATE MARCH and APRIL/early Spring**

- “No Homework” night on first night of Passover
- Accepted student visiting days—be alert for student and parent/guardian visitors in your classroom and possible special schedules and programs
- Seventh-grade Cultural Heritage Project begins
- Progress Reports due for students at risk or about whom specific information needs to be shared
- Seniors will be gone when you least expect it, visiting colleges to which they have been accepted
- “Prom” will absorb the energies of many students; volunteer chaperones needed, too!
- “Senior Skip Day”—an inevitable spring tradition—may occur
- Spring performances and intensive rehearsals begin—stressed students; attend what you can

### **MAY/late Spring**

- The end is in sight—but hold on tight; insanity seems to reign!
- Begin wrapping up curriculum as end of Term III and year looms
- Reunion—not a command performance for faculty, but graduates enjoy seeing teachers, especially at the Friday evening cocktail-dinner party
- Seventh-grade Cultural Heritage Project presentation evening and following day
- Senior Farewell

- Seniors depart for four-week projects; some will be on campus, many will be back for afternoon activities
- Advanced Placement examinations—proctors always needed
- The Upper School musical and Middle School spring play bring evening delights as well as preoccupied students; sometimes lots of stress, incomplete work—be firm but humane
- Arrange final conference times with advisee families
- Upper School: Be ready to devote a few days to review for final assessments; introduce no new material during last few days before final assessments; students will crave “review sheets;” examinations should be written a week in advance

### **JUNE/end of school**

- Set time aside to correct examinations and complete grades and comments
- Senior grades are due before others
- Brief classes to return corrected examinations on Thursday of the last week
- Final conference day with advisees and families on Thursday of last week
- Friday of last week—a dress-up day for all!
  - Eighth-grade promotion—required for Middle School faculty and Department Heads, followed by
  - Final Assembly—in Gymnasium B, required for all faculty, followed by
  - Yearbook distribution, by grade
  - Luncheon for seniors and faculty, followed by
  - Commencement rehearsal and the Aaron Hoffman Memorial Senior–Faculty softball game
- Commencement is on Sunday after Final Assembly; held in Gymnasium A—attendance required
- Grades and comments due
- Pack up classroom materials to make space for Summer Programs!
- End-of-year party at Head’s house is for all staff and families; official farewells occur then
- Final faculty meetings required
- Advisor letters to be written for students whose families did not attend final conferences



## 4. HOW TO DO IT WELL

### ON BOUNDARIES—GENERAL THOUGHTS ON SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Teachers' primary role is to support our students' development and success through our teaching, our advising, and our conversations and relationships with their teachers, coaches, advisors, and—above all—their families.

As simple as this seems, this work can sometimes become very complex, and at times we are invited into conversations as part of our professional relationships that take us outside our comfort zones.

A few principles should stand to help us all through our work:

- We are teachers, not counselors, and it is not our role to pass judgment on student or family decisions related to a student's medical or psychological situation. Our job is to help the student and family through the challenges they face and to support the decisions that they have made. If you as a teacher strongly question such a decision, take your concern to the School Counselor or to a member of the administration.
- When information is shared with you that makes you uncomfortable personally or that may indicate that a student or someone else is at physical or psychological risk, take that concern to the School Counselor or a member of the administration IMMEDIATELY.
- Do not make promises of confidentiality, non-action, or action to a student or a parent or guardian if you feel that you may need to share information with the School Counselor or a member of the administration so as to act in the best interest of the child. There may even be situations in which you have to break such a promise in order to fulfill your legally (and ethically) mandated role as a designated caretaker of children. Massachusetts defines the concept of "at risk" broadly, and so check with the School Counselor or a member of the administration if you have any doubts or concerns about a particular student or situation.
- We are not our students' (or their parents' or guardians') friends, however close, positive, and cordial our relations with some of these may be. In the end it is our duty to act in the interest of the student, and so to invite or promise to hold confidences about the personal lives of students is to cross a boundary between professional good judgment and unprofessional or even actionable behavior. If you have concerns about any issue in your relationship with students or their families, take these concerns to the School Counselor or a member of the administration; at the very least, discuss such concerns with a trusted and experienced colleague who can offer you proper guidance.

Above all, as a teacher you should never let a specific concern or situation make you feel alone. Even if you feel you may have erred, it is important to proactively and forthrightly address any situation that arises. Maintaining professional boundaries is one of the most crucial parts of being a professional and a member of the Beaver community. We are all in this together, and we can help and support each other through even the most challenging of circumstances.

## CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT, BEAVER-STYLE—THE BASICS

Beaver subscribes to a constructivist philosophy of education, based on the simple premise that students construct understandings based on their own prior learning and the intentional learning experiences provided them by their teachers in the curriculum. A few basic ideas underlie all aspects of curriculum and assessment (and pedagogy) at Beaver:

- When designing any course, term’s work, or even a unit, the effective teacher is above all intentional in the choice of materials, learning experiences, and assessments.
- Effective curriculum is designed based on a teacher’s clearly articulated learning goals. This may or may not be based on a text or other externally developed curriculum, but at Beaver what matters are the teacher’s specific intentions for learning in the specific class being taught.
- We adhere to the principles of “Planning Backwards” curriculum design, using one of the many templates suggested by Project Zero or Grant Wiggins; the Director of College Counseling can supply teachers with a master template combining these methodologies.
- It is useful to have in mind Grant Wiggins’ and Jay McTighe’s Hierarchy of Cognitive Attributes, describing the stages by which individual’s internalize learning:
  - SKILLS—basic things you must know or know how to do to achieve other goals
  - UNDERSTANDINGS—things requiring (deep) conceptual awareness; describable by degree or quality: Can the student
    - explain?
    - interpret?
    - apply knowledge?
    - perceive material from multiple perspectives?
    - generate empathy based on knowledge and understanding?
    - expand self-awareness and self-knowledge based on understanding?
  - HABITS OF MIND—dispositions toward certain intellectual or cognitive responses when presented with novel situations or stimuli
- Effective assessment asks students to demonstrate their understanding of important material by asking students to perform meaningful, worthy tasks that display that understanding; such tasks are known as “authentic” assessment—the tasks have real meaning to students.
- “Assess what is valued, and value what is assessed.” The point of assessment, obviously, is to provide students with meaningful feedback on their performance and on their level of understanding. Evaluating (grading) student work should first and foremost be about giving students information that will help them improve subsequent performance.

**Rubrics.** Grading rubrics are highly recommended as a way for teachers to give students specific information about aspects of performance, both the level of achievement and the nature of the learning being evaluated.
- Effective assessment involves a balance of strategies, with tests and quizzes focusing on content and basic skill material; deeper understanding and application should be assessed by more complex and open-ended assessment techniques such as essays, projects, multi-genre work, debates, and Socratic Seminars. Multimodal or multi-genre (e.g., presentation + paper + visual aid + discussion) assessments are especially powerful as learning tools, although they require considerable planning and monitoring by the teacher.
- Assessment should be viewed as a trajectory in which types of assessment are keyed to the level of understanding being measured. Useful tools for developing this kind of “trajectory” are those based on Benjamin Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in the Cognitive

Domain. As content complexity and expected depth of understanding rise, assessment methods should change correspondingly:

<i>LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING</i>	<i>APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT TYPE</i>
<i>Knowledge</i>	Fact quiz, basic skill test (T/F, match, M/C)
<i>Comprehension</i>	Problem set, reading questions, short answer
<i>Application</i>	Cause/effect questions, short essays, word problems, “labs”
<i>Analysis</i>	Analytical essays, more open-ended labs, differentiation questions, complex word problems
<i>Synthesis</i>	Open-ended essays, formal proposals, multi-genre projects, persuasive essays, student-generated problem sets, student-written thematic drama, student-generated lab problems
<i>Evaluation</i>	Compare/contrast essays, op-ed, critical study, reflection

- In the interest of exposing students to a variety of assessment types, each teacher will assign a major assessment during each term.
- In lieu of examinations in the first term of a two-term Upper School course, teachers are asked to develop a major project that requires students to synthesize, summarize, or otherwise generate evidence of appropriately deep and complex understanding of course content. Examples of this kind of project include:
  - Major research or analytical writing
  - Major projects of an individual or collaborative nature, especially those with significant writing and presentation components
  - Portfolios of designated work, including significant student reflection

Major tests, serial tests, or take-home examinations would not be appropriate for this purpose, although such assessments clearly have a place in any comprehensive program of assessing student learning and understanding.

- Collaborative projects, though complex to organize and manage, are extremely powerful learning tools. (Teachers wishing to design such projects may consult with their department chair or the any of several veteran faculty members; the school can supply teachers with an excellent model for designing work-equitable collaborative projects.)
- The necessary sequel to assessment is evaluation, or grading. Grading at Beaver is currently based on a letter system (A, A-, ..., D, D-, NP—Not Passing). Grades should be meaningful to students as a source of feedback on performance, but a grade should never be considered as a single point of reference; a student’s grades should reflect the context of what is being assessed and how a range of assessments are incorporated into the overall framework of the course. (See “General Thoughts on Grading,” p. 32.)

**Grade books.** There are many ways for teachers to keep grade books. The critical thing to remember when setting up a grade book is to enable the accurate and timely recording of pertinent information about the substance as well as the quality of student learning.

*Spreadsheets. It is also important that teachers recognize the limitations of “grading” and of grade books. Even the most obsessively precise record-keeping systems are in fact largely subjective. Spreadsheets and other similar methods of grade calculation present the user with information that is only as “objective” and “accurate” as the evaluation of each piece of work; do not be deceived into believing that a spreadsheet grade is “objective.”*

- The thoughtful development of curriculum is a hallmark of Beaver teaching. Teachers looking for guidance or additional professional development in this area should consult with their department chair or the Assistant Head of School.

## HOW TO THINK ABOUT HOMEWORK

Students should be trained to view time spent on homework as a regular, scheduled obligation built into the structure of each academic course they take—just as is time in the classroom. Nightly assignments and long-range projects should be presented as necessary preparation for effective class work, and as essential for the achievement of course goals. Teachers can help students learn how to allocate time for assignments by detailing homework expectations well in advance and by helping students plan long-range assignments. Advisors can play an important role in helping students to schedule their week's work in all subjects, and, as necessary, productively communicate deficiencies to parents.

Each department or grade level has, and should have, some discretion in setting the amount of work expected in a particular class or subject, or by a particular student. In the Upper School the following guidelines should be adhered to generally: in a typical course each nightly assignment should be formulated so as not to exceed 60 minutes for the average student in that class to complete. Our goal is to keep students challenged and engaged in their classes by providing varied types of assignments requiring students' time, thought, and care. Homework assignments for Advanced courses will be longer by necessity, and that additional responsibility must be clearly specified in the course prospectus.

In the Middle School, 6th graders should expect 20–30 minutes per class, 7th graders should expect 30 minutes per class, and 8th graders 30–40 minutes per class.

Beaver's policy is not to give homework over religious holidays or to give especially burdensome assignments over long school vacations. Students should certainly feel free to use vacation time for individual enrichment, for remedial work, or for correcting deficiencies noted in warning reports.

The prospectus for each course should include an explicit and detailed statement of the teacher's policies and expectations concerning homework.

## HOW TO DEVELOP STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

**Beaver policy is that students should always have at least a week's homework assignments in hand at any given time.** The basic requirement is that teachers produce for students a written

assignment sheet that specifies work to be done and due dates. Teachers should post information on their class site, either as a message or a downloadable document.

Good assignment sheets (and effective assignments) do not have to be complicated. They should specify the work to be done, the materials to be used, and the date on which work is due. Specific guidelines as to expectations for length, quality, or required elements should be included as appropriate.

For students working on long-term projects it is extremely helpful and important that teachers be as specific as possible in spelling out interim steps or stages. The publication of specific nightly goals or expectations help students manage their time as well as helping to forestall the disastrous situation in which a student has waited too long to complete a project even though there were nights “when I didn’t have any homework”—in other words, nights when the student should have been working away at the project but did not. (Specification of interim steps is also useful for families, who may otherwise wonder why their child seems to have little or no homework at times.) Clearly, older students should require less guidance of this sort than younger students.

The development of assignments for a particular unit of study should incorporate the principles of effective curriculum and assessment design laid out in the section on Curriculum & Assessment, above.

## **ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING, BEAVER STYLE**

One of the key characteristics of a Beaver teacher is a passion for being reflective and thoughtful in our approach to teaching. To this end, assessment (and, subsequently, grading) is extremely important and our philosophy about this complex term must be unified. What follows is a summary for people new to Beaver of our approach to assessment and grading. This is just the beginning; you must be willing to follow up with discussion and debate with your colleagues. It is important that our faculty use the best pedagogical practices related to assessment, communicates with a common language, and works with an ever-increasing clarity of purpose.

The overarching purpose of our classes is to help our students develop their capacity for critical understanding. As you would in planning any course, begin thinking of assessment by asking some essential questions:

*“What is the purpose of assessment?”* Assessment has two purposes. Some assessments are designed to measure understanding, while others are intended to develop understanding. In both cases, assessment allows students to demonstrate what they have understood thus far and for teachers to decide whether and how to alter their class plans to improve future learning.

*“What is the purpose of grades?”* Grades are a method of briefly communicating a student’s understanding. They are extremely limited in that they cannot on their own communicate the full story of a student’s achievements. One thing is for certain: *a grade should not be a punishment or a reward.*

It is important to reconsider these essential questions periodically to ensure that our decisions regarding assessment and grading are pedagogically sound. Take a moment right now—think of a

time in your own learning experience when you were given an assignment that you felt truly allowed you to demonstrate how much you knew. Think of a time when a teacher gave you an assignment that was especially poor at gauging what you understood. Now think about a time when you received a grade that you knew did not accurately reflect your understanding of the course material. Just as we do not need to teach the way that others have taught before us, we do not need to grade and assess in the same ways, either—especially if those ways ultimately do not support our pedagogical goals.

Based on the work of Grant Wiggins and others, our own reflections, and on pilot programs run by a handful of teachers at Beaver in 2006–07, we have developed the following basic requirements for teachers at Beaver:

- Use common language when discussing assessment and giving comments:  
**Product/Performance, Process, and Engagement**
- Vary the forms of assessment used throughout a course.
- Be thoughtful about your gradebook
  - Develop a system to gather frequent data
  - Reduce reliance on automated grading systems
  - Avoid giving zeros
  - Consider dropping extreme grades
  - Do not automatically default to using averages to arrive at a final grade. Consider the mean (average) vs. the median (middle grade) vs. any other approach that might better reflect a student’s actual learning and understanding in your class.

A great deal of thought and consideration has gone into these recommendations. If they do not initially make sense, then discuss them vigorously with others.

### ***PRODUCT/PERFORMANCE, PROCESS, AND ENGAGEMENT***

These are common terms that all departments should use when discussing assessment with students, parents, and colleagues.

- **Product/Performance**—Does the student demonstrate understanding through doing? (Demonstrated through Summative Assessments and assessments of Concept Understandings)
- **Process**—What is the student’s pathway or disposition as s/he undertakes and works to complete assigned and desired learning? (Demonstrated through Formative Assessments and observation and assessment of Work Habits)
- **Engagement**—What is the student's disposition toward learning? (Demonstrated through observed and measured Participation, Collaboration, Initiative, application of Habits of Mind)

(Note that departments are currently in the process of defining more precisely what each of these broad terms represent within their disciplines.)

### ***VARYING ASSESSMENT***

*Varying assessment* takes two distinct forms.

- First, make sure that students have many different opportunities to demonstrate understanding. Traditional tests and quizzes are obvious, but consider all the other ways that allow you to assess a student and all the possibilities for what a “test” or “exam”

might look like: class work, group work, discussions, skits, problem sets, projects, oral work, visual work, written work, etc.

- Second, use both *formative* and *summative* assessments in your course. *Formative assessments* help students to develop their understanding. They are quick and give immediate feedback to the student and the teacher. The student finds out where he may be falling short in time to do something about it, and the teacher finds out where he needs to adjust his approach to the material. Strictly speaking, formative assessments should not affect the final Performance grade, and they should be helpful in measuring Progress. *Summative assessments* are meant to judge a student's understanding at a given moment in time. Most obviously, these are unit exams and final exams. There will be times when an assessment feels like it is both summative and formative, when it seems to be measuring a variety of things. There are, understandably, gray areas, and that's okay.

### **DATA- AND EVIDENCE-GATHERING**

Reflective grades are based on robust data (quantitative & qualitative). Find or create easy ways to gather and record that data. (Some folks around the school have neat approaches that might work for you; ask around.) You can use words, symbols, numbers, etc. You can use spiral notebooks, Word, Excel, Post-Its, etc. But whatever you do, create a system that allows you to gather AND interpret a lot of data. The point is not to create more work for you, but to gather enough information to make informed and defensible judgments about your students.

### **GRADING**

These recommendations concerning how we grade assessments are based on the belief that a grade is a tool for communication rather than punishment or reward.

- First, do not assume that whatever your grade book program spits out as a final grade is what ought to be a student's grade. It is nice to have these tools to alleviate some calculation, but they should never replace your own thoughtfulness and understanding of a student and their story in your course.
- Second, do not assume that averaging a student's scores is the best way to arrive at their grade. This goes along with the first point. Don't let the "math" replace your own common sense and professional judgment. Experiment with multiple methods of calculation. Maybe taking the median would be a better reflection of that student's understanding in your course. Or maybe taking another approach to her grade would best communicate her performance. Have a *pedagogical reason* for why you do what you do with your grades—not just because it is what has always been done.
- Third, avoid giving zeros at all costs. In fact, if you can, eliminate them all together. This, historically, has been a controversial recommendation. Generally, a grade of zero is primarily used as a severe form of punishment rather than a helpful evaluation tool. On a test, a zero communicates that *nothing* was understood (a very unlikely situation), when in fact the student may have neglected to make up a test or other work missed due to absence. Additionally, in a traditional grading scheme, a zero will skew an averaged grade disproportionately downward. Any situation in which you initially feel justified in giving a zero is likely to be a situation in which the student needs to be called to responsibility—but this must be done outside the realm of the grade as much as possible. The grade is meant to reflect a student's understanding, which cannot be fairly judged on the basis on no work. The comment (or the Process grade or the Effort Grade in the Upper School) is the place for pointing out a student's poor habits.

- Fourth, consider dropping extreme grades. This is not unusual; teachers often offer to drop the lowest test score. But maybe the highest score should be dropped, too. The reasoning behind this recommendation is based in the assumption that anything outside the student's normal results might be an anomaly. (This invites the question: How do we justify this recommendation in conjunction with the others above? It always comes down to understanding our students well. You are not required to drop all extreme grades or never to average a student's scores, but you are required to be thoughtful about what you do choose to do, always keeping in mind that a grade is a reflection of understanding.)

### ***CURRENTLY...***

The discussion of assessment and grading at Beaver is ongoing. If any of the above requirements or recommendations seems odd, talk about it with your department head and others. Talk about it even if it doesn't seem odd! Assessment and grading are difficult and are bound to raise questions and concerns. As well they should be when you think of what it's all about—a teacher's professional judgment.

Many conversations at Beaver are focusing on how to weight the roles that Performance and Process should play in a final grade. Should more weight (and how much?) be given to Performance and Process in the younger grades while Product reigns supreme in the older grades? Both divisions, but particularly the Upper School, have been working to redesign the grade report and comment form to better accommodate the language of assessment.

### ***RESOURCES***

There are some excellent professional resources on assessment and grading, and your department chair can guide you to many of these. Along with almost anything written by Grant Wiggins or published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development on the subjects, *Fair Isn't Always Equal* by Rick Wormeli (Stenhouse, 2006) and *How to Grade for Learning* by Ken O'Connor (Corwin, 2002) have informed many of our discussions on assessment and evaluation.

## **SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS ON GRADING**

### ***IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL***

The middle school grading system offers a special opportunity to educate students about the Beaver grading system by which they will be assessed for the next seven years. It is the goal of this philosophy to minimize student anxiety surrounding grades and allow students to truly focus on their learning and on the actual work, not on the grade. In the sixth grade it is the goal of the teachers to use a narrative rubric so that students and parents are introduced to how assessments are made. Rather than using traditional grades, the sixth-grade rubric is based on narrative comments. Merit, proficient work, approaching proficient work, and beginning to approach proficient work will be used to represent various categories of standards by which work is assessed. In seventh and eighth grades teachers use a traditional grading system (A, B, C, D, NP), teaching the students to look carefully at the narrative comments and incorporate them into goals for each term. Term grades in the middle school are not cumulative. Full-year grades are not computed.

## **IN THE UPPER SCHOOL**

1. Grades in the Upper School range from A, A-, to D-, N.P. (not passing). *Note: Beaver does not use the A+ grade.*
2. Where given, term examination results should be recorded as letter, not numerical, grades. The relative weight of a term examination is determined within departments. The relative weight of the examination should be noted in the prospectus of each course distributed to students some time in the first two weeks of the term.
3. Year averages are not computed for term courses within a single department. For example, a year grade would not be determined in English for a senior taking an elective each term. However, in cases when a student switches a section or a teacher within the same course at the term, an average of the two term marks, determined in conjunction with the Department Head, will represent the year grade. In such cases the exams at the end of the term will be computed into the term, not the year averages, unless specifically determined otherwise by the Department Head.
4. October Progress reports are filed in students' individual folders but do not become a part of the permanent transcript. Term grades and comments do become part of the permanent transcript/record.
5. An evaluation of effort of the preceding marking period is noted on a four-element scale on the comment form. (See "How to Determine Effort Grades," p. 41xxx)
6. The automated comment system provides appropriate headings for students, courses, sections, and grades. Problems or inconsistencies should be reported to the Registrar's office and/or the Assistant Head of School as soon as possible.
7. As soon as grades are complete, the grade sheet, distributed before the end of the marking period, should be returned to the Registrar.

## **HOW TO CREATE INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGING COURSE WORK**

The characteristics of intellectually challenging work do not vary greatly from grade to grade or discipline to discipline. The intellectual challenge for *teachers* is to ensure that all course work inspires students to use the maximum amount of intellectual power and to develop habits of mind like precision, empathy, intellectual curiosity, consideration of multiple points of view, and optimism.

Here are some of the characteristics of intellectually challenging course work:

### **INTELLECTUAL QUALITY AND DEMANDS OF REQUIRED WORK**

- Questions of high intellectual quality are posed to students
- Deep and detailed analysis is a regular feature of work
- Different ways of learning and knowing are recognized and utilized
- Texts are carefully selected to expand student capacity
- Proficiency in different modes of expression is required and evaluated

- Students have opportunities in the curriculum for creative problem-solving and expression
- Students have opportunities in the curriculum to learn and to apply learning in authentic contexts

### ***PURPOSES OF ASSIGNED WORK***

- Homework is used as tool to strengthen understanding
- Scale and frequency of reading and writing assignments are based on clear teaching/learning objectives
- Tests and quizzes are about measuring and solidifying learning and understanding
- Major projects are connected to clear teaching and learning objectives

### ***STANDARDS—GRADING AND FEEDBACK***

- Detailed, precise, and prescriptive feedback is given to students as work is evaluated
- Frequency of evaluation of work and of overall performance is timely and appropriate
- Students are asked to respond to feedback by demonstrating improvement to ensure mastery
- A clear and informative grading system is used
- The teacher responds in a meaningful way to student underperformance

### ***RECOGNITION OF DISTINCTIVE CAPACITY/INTEREST***

- Students have opportunities to pursue topics based on interest and affinity
- Students have opportunities to learn and to demonstrate knowledge beyond school walls

### ***STRENGTHENING/REMEDICATION OF RECOGNIZED DEFICIENCY OR WEAKNESS***

- The teacher recognizes and responds to multiple learning styles and strengths
- The teacher distinguishes deficiencies in background from issues of ability or learning style

Developmental appropriateness, of course, applies to each of these, as do basic stipulations as to the overall objectives for a course—that algebra students, for example, should master the skills of the level of the course in which they are enrolled. That should go without saying, but we will say it anyhow.

## HOW TO WRITE A COURSE PROSPECTUS

### *What is a course prospectus?*

A course prospectus is a brief descriptive document outlining the overall goals and content of a course and the teacher's expectations for students. The prospectus is given to students at the beginning of the year and often to families on Back-to-School Night. The department head and division director also collect copies.

The idea is to provide clear, unambiguous information on such things as readings and grading policies for students and families.

### *Basic organization (confining your prospectus single sheet is good):*

<p><b>COURSE NAME</b> Teacher name</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>COURSE PROSPECTUS, 2011–12</u></b></p> <p><b><u>OVERVIEW</u></b> This course will ...  Significant course goals include ...</p> <p><b><u>TEXTS and MATERIALS</u></b> Readings for the course will include ... Other texts will be ...</p> <p><b><u>ASSESSMENTS</u></b> Students will read and write regularly and often. There will be tests and quizzes .... Non-traditional assessments may include .... Graded assignments are weighted .... The final examination ... Up to n% of a student's grade will be based on class participation, which will include ....</p> <p>[If appropriate ]<b><u>HONORS</u></b> Students who elect to take the course at the Honors level can expect ....</p> <p><b><u>STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES</u></b> Each student should come to class each day ....  Most importantly, .... Extra help ....</p>
--

If your department has set policies on late or missing work or on other questions that should be clear to students, these should be attached to the prospectus.

*See the sample, next page.* The sections on assessment and Student Responsibilities are essentially boilerplate; please feel free to cut and paste. Your department or mentor may have better ideas.

## **ENGLISH 10**

T. Teacher

### **COURSE PROSPECTUS, 2011–12**

#### **OVERVIEW**

This course will introduce students to the formal study of American literature, including novels, shorter fiction, poetry, non-fiction, images, film, and key documents. The course will address the following essential questions:

- ◆ *How does literature embody national character and national ideals?*
- ◆ *How does literature serve to question and challenge a society?*
- ◆ *What makes a certain body of literature “American”?*

Significant course goals include having students develop their fluency and skill in reading comprehension, interpretation, and analysis and develop their skills in expository and analytical writing. Course content will also include formal study of grammar, usage, and vocabulary.

#### **TEXTS**

Readings for the course will include novels by Cather (as summer reading), Kerouac, Hawthorne, Chopin, Morrison, Owen, and Fitzgerald, longer non-fiction by Thoreau and Douglass, and significant amounts of poetry and short fiction. Other texts will be the AMSCO *Vocabulary for the College-Bound Student* (1993) and the current edition of the *MLA Handbook*.

#### **ASSESSMENTS**

Students will read and write regularly. There will be tests and quizzes as appropriate to the material being studied. Non-traditional assessments may include oral presentations, hands-on projects, visual and audio presentations, and work portfolios. Graded assignments are weighted in approximate relation to their length and degree of difficulty. The final examination (which will count for 20% of the course grade) will be the major assessment in the second term. Up to 15% of a student’s grade will be based on class participation, including punctuality, active listening, and collaboration.

#### **HONORS**

Students who elect to take the course at the Honors level can expect to have major assignments differentiated in terms of degree of conceptual or analytical difficulty. Honors students are expected to engage more deeply with course material and to play a significant role in class discussion and collaborative exercises.

#### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each student should come to class each day with her or his notebook, the text from which the day’s assignment has been drawn, and a pen or pencil. Problems with completing assignments should be discussed *before* the work is to be handed in. It is an expectation of the course that students CHECK THEIR BEAVER E-MAIL DAILY as well as looking at the course site.

Most importantly, each student should strive to take an active interest and play an active role in this course and its material. Students are encouraged to raise questions about the material being studied and to ask for assistance or clarification whenever difficulties of understanding arise. Extra help is always available by appointment.

## HOW TO MANAGE YOUR GOOGLE CALENDARS AND CLASS WEBSITES

### *REQUIREMENTS FOR NAMING CALENDARS:*

Each teacher is required to create an assignment calendar for every class s/he teaches.

This will act as a syllabus for the course. Instead of this syllabus existing in paper form, it will live as an online calendar and due dates will appear as an all-day event on a given calendar date.

If you have more than one section of the class, it is important each section has its own calendar because due dates may differ.

When creating calendars in the Google Calendar tool, each teacher is required to follow a simple formula for naming the class calendars.

Your calendar must be named in the following manner:

#### **ASGMT - Name of Class (Section Number, if needed)**

For example, if you teach 6th Grade Humanities, your assignment calendar for the course would be named:

#### **ASGMT - Humanities 6.1**

This uniformity allows students to distinguish class assignment calendars from other calendars like sports schedules.

### *REQUIREMENTS FOR SHARING AND VIEWING CALENDARS:*

Once you have created the calendar, you must share it with your students as viewers so they can see the events on the calendar.

It is important to remember you **will not be able to share calendars prior to the start of the school year**, as many students will not be able to receive the invitation because they have yet to log into their Beaver Google account.

However, when you share the calendar with every student in your class, please instruct them to change the **color** of the calendar to correspond with the color associated with the subject area.

At Beaver, we have assigned colors to each discipline, so that a student can associate his/her science class assignment calendar with the color red.

Each user must change the colors of each calendar s/he owns or views. If your calendar is flagged red, that does not mean your students' calendars will be red. They must set the color individually.

The color assignments are as follows:

- ◆ Red – Science and Science electives
- ◆ Purple – English and English electives
- ◆ Brown – History and History electives

- ◆ Pink – Visual Arts and VA electives
- ◆ Yellow – Math and Math electives
- ◆ Teal – Modern Language and ML electives
- ◆ Olive green – Performing Arts
- ◆ Grey – Middle School Day Rotation

At the beginning of the school year, please instruct your students to mark your calendar with the corresponding subject area color.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHER SITES:**

At Beaver, each teacher is required to create a Homeroom site, which serves as a container for various classroom resources.

These resources include, but are not limited to, a course prospectus, important dates, assignment outlines, announcements, and links to any outside resources used in the course (like wikis, nings, and blogs).

These resources should be available on your site so that other members of the Beaver community—including your students—can easily access them at any time.

It's really up to you what is included, but there are a few **mandatory requirements** regarding what should be included on your site.

These requirements include:

- A page for each class containing
  - Calendar gadget which syncs with the ASGMT calendar for the class
  - Course Prospectus (as a Google Doc)
  - Links to assignment outlines and other classroom documents (as Google Docs, PDFs, etc.)
  - Links to any blogs, nings, or wikis you intend to use in the class
- Links to each class page in the Navigation box, located in the left sidebar
- A sidebar text box with the following resources
  - Beaver Technology Learning Space (located at <http://sites.google.com/a/bcdschool.org/techguide/>)
  - Your email address

Many of these requirements are outlined in our Google Apps training. However, if you have any questions or need help with the mechanics of completing your site, please contact the Help Desk at [helpdesk@bcdschool.org](mailto:helpdesk@bcdschool.org)

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR SHARING TEACHER SITES:**

During the first week of school, you must share your homeroom site with all of the students in your classes.

It is important to remember you will **not be able to share your site prior to the start of the school year**, as many students will not be able to receive the invitation because they have yet to log into their Beaver Google account.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR SHARING CALENDARS AND COURSE PROSPECTUSES WITH THE BEAVER HELP DESK:**

In an effort to ease parent access to some important information about your class, you are **required to share all assignment calendars and course prospectuses with the following Beaver Users:**

- helpdesk@bcdschool.org
- parents@bcdschool.org

Links to your assignment calendars and course prospectuses will be available on a Parent Information Site. This site allows parents to access important due dates and an outline of your expectations for students in your course.

All course prospectuses should be shared with the above users as Google Docs viewers. All calendars should be shared with the above users with the following permissions: “See All Event Details.”

## **HOW TO FIND STUDENT INFORMATION**

### **STUDENT SCHEDULES AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

Student schedules and contact information can be found in *PowerSchool* by typing the last name of the student you are looking for in the blank box (under “search students”) and then clicking the magnifying glass or **Browse Students** by clicking on any of the quick links (last name + initial, grade, or gender). Once you have picked the student, go to the left column, and under **Information** click on **Parents Info I** to find contact information for household A or go to **Parents Info II** if you are trying to contact a parent in household B. You can also find contact information in the **Demographics** screen. To look at the student schedule, select the **Bell Schedule View** under **Scheduling** in the left column as well.

From *PowerTeacher*, you can access the schedule and contact information for students you teach or advise:

1. Click the backpack icon for the class whose student pages you would like to view. The class roster appears and you can find your other classes in the bottom left corner.
2. Click the last name of the student whose record you would like to view. The screen will display the default page set as your preference (see “How to change your default student” page in the Registrar site). Most pages are view-only, so you cannot make any changes.
3. Choose a different student page from the drop-down menu (“select screens”) located to the right by just clicking on it. You will find options such as:
  - Demographics
  - Parent/Guardian Information I and II
  - Bell Schedule
  - and more

You could also log into the Beaver website and find all student and family contact information in the Directory.

### ***TEACHER SCHEDULES AND CONTACT INFORMATION***

Teacher class lists and schedules can be found in *PowerSchool* by clicking on “Staff” in the left column of the home screen, searching and selecting the specific teacher, and then clicking on the **Teacher Bell Schedule View** in the left column. If you need to get staff information, click on **Staff Directory** under “Other Information” in the center of the screen.

Every teacher can access his/her own schedule and class rosters from *PowerTeacher* by clicking on **Personalize** in the left column and then clicking on **Teacher Bell Schedule**.

There is no access to other teachers schedules from *PowerTeacher*. Google calendars should be updated so teachers can find out if another teacher is busy at certain times.

In order to get other faculty contact information from *PowerTeacher*, click on **Staff Directory** in the left column of the home screen.

### ***PERMANENT FILES***

Students’ permanent files can be found in the Registrar’s Office in locked file cabinets. The Registrar has the key to these files.

Inside student files can be found various materials, including the student’s application materials, standardized testing results, the results of any educational or psychological evaluations, and grades and comments from the student’s time at Beaver.

Student file contents are confidential in the extreme; under no circumstances should the contents be shared. Files should not leave the Registrar’s office, although academic administrators or members of the counseling department may sign files out.

It is a good idea to review the files of your new advisees each year and especially to make yourself familiar with a student’s learning profile or any educational or psychological evaluations before meeting with the student and/or the student’s parent(s) or guardian(s).

## **HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES: E-MAIL AND VOICEMAIL**

There are times when teachers are asked to respond via e-mail to questions about students. Whether this request comes from a family, an advisor, an administrator, or a teacher, one needs to be thoughtful and careful when preparing any comment on a student’s behavior or performance via e-mail.

First of all, the school’s policy is that **teachers will respond to any family communication in any medium within 24 hours on school days**. This goes for voicemail and even written notes as well as e-mail.

Teachers sending written check-in information to an advisor, an administrator, or a teacher should assume that their words will somehow end up directly in front of the family's eyes. The medium, after all, is e-mail, and things happen. Therefore, write as if you were composing directly for the family: be clear, be honest, be direct, include evidence, but avoid little judgments or flippancies that might not be perceived as entirely helpful by the family. Be very circumspect in your references to your own emotional or mental state; better still, avoid the subject. It would be especially helpful if you could add prescriptive advice for improvement in the student's performance.

If you are responding to a question from a family or if you are an advisor gathering check-in reports to send to a student's home, edit where you need to, or summarize and categorize where you see opportunities to do so in a way that you think would be helpful. Assist your colleagues, and make your own job easier, by tempering, rephrasing, or otherwise exerting a calming and positive editorial hand on language or content that you think might not be helpful.

The point of communicating about students is to be helpful, of course, and all of our communication, and especially communication in writing, should be scrupulously correct and professional.

One last thing: Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling matter. Errors will occur, but try hard to avoid them.

## HOW TO HOLD EFFECTIVE PARENT CONFERENCES

WHAT FAMILIES WANT TO KNOW:

- **Do you really know my child?**
- **Is my child doing the work?**
- **Is my child behaving properly?**
- **What is my child doing well?**
- **What can my child do to improve?**

*DO*

- lay out copies of your progress reports in the order the families will come
- **keep to the time schedule**
- review and have nearby the students' learning profiles to avoid putting your foot in your mouth
- **have a notebook and a pen near at hand so you can write things down either during or just after the meeting**
- have your gradebook at hand (but not necessarily open in your lap; it's about the student, not just the grades)
- **ASK QUESTIONS about the student: interests, passions, outside reading choices. This is YOUR chance to find out about the student, which is one of the most important things you do**
- show student work if you have it at hand and if it illustrates what you have to say
- **be positive and upbeat; show the parents that you know and like their child. The conference may be the occasion on which you learn the crucial thing about the student that really helps you to appreciate her or him**

- be ready to respond to the “What else can we do at home to help?” question—you will probably hear this often, because they WANT to help

### **DON'T**

- shoot yourself in the foot by talking about class issues—behavior, size, your own control
- **discuss other students, ESPECIALLY by name**
- deliver bad surprises if the news should have gone home earlier
- **deliver diagnoses as if you were the child’s psychologist—but don’t be afraid to DESCRIBE behavior, either**
- be afraid to politely put someone off who comes at an unscheduled time
- **forget to ask if there is anything else the family thinks you could do to help**
- assume that the people you are meeting with are either birth parents or married; some students have guardians or are adopted, and some parents are divorced but come to conferences together
- **be afraid to discontinue a difficult meeting and suggest a reschedule with an administrator present**
- forget to enjoy yourself

## **HOW TO INVIGILATE (that’s British English for “supervise a test”)**

### **Basic instructions for giving examinations or tests:**

- Make your room an examination center: arrange desks and chairs for comfort and security, give yourself a path to move around the room; erase or remove materials that might aid students.
- Set an examination tone: use your “proctoring voice” to announce the ground rules relating to time (see below); talking (none, on pain of being removed and the examination result nullified); bathroom trips (raise your hand and wait to be excused); out-of-seat experiences (none, other than bathroom). Make it clear that you will come to the seat of a student with a question, not the other way around. You should be the pencil sharpener, not the student.
- **(FOR EXAMINATIONS) Be aware of the time: 1.5 hour minimum; 2 hours for non-accommodated students; 3 hours maximum for Extended Time students. Start and end promptly, on a clear verbal signal.**
- See to it that desks are clear of distractions/security risks. Some students may have pens, crystals, magic animals, or whatever, and you must decide what’s okay. Water bottles seem to be de rigueur these days, but soda is not okay. FOR EXAMINATIONS: Small candy that can be consumed without noisy unwrapping is probably okay; Snickers bars are questionable.
- After the examination starts, move around the room to assure yourself that students are working on the right test and that there are no suspicious piles of paper or other possible security risks on or near desks. Keep yourself up and visible throughout the test; even if you have work to do, place yourself so that a quick raising of your head will enable you to scan the entire room. Be alert for raised hands. Stop your work and make a circuit of the room every few minutes; the more often you do this, the less of a distraction it is, and you can be sure that you are being suitably diligent in your supervision.
- One person at a time in the bathroom should be the rule.

- If you need to make a general announcement, make some kind of preliminary statement to get students' attention before you get to the point you need to make: "I'm sorry, but I need to interrupt you for a moment. Please pause what you're doing. Now, in Question 7 ..."
- When students are finished, have them put all papers and bluebooks together in a packet. You should note the time of each student leaves the examination on the test itself; this is useful later when writing comments for extended-time students and to note when students might have rushed through their work.
- Keep the room quiet and in "examination mode" until the last student has left.

These rules are not about trust, but rather about setting a serious tone for a serious undertaking. Students appreciate the quiet space created by setting a formal tone.

Every teacher should make a point of proctoring a major standardized test from time to time; it is a valuable learning experience and one that helps you learn the essence of proctoring technique.

## **PROGRESS (INTERIM) REPORTS (Upper School)**

1. At approximately the mid-point of Term I (*October 17*), teachers will submit a Progress Report through the online system for all students. These reports are in the form of pull-down menus and address student effort and performance; there is also space for a brief, required written comment.
2. All students with a C- or below in any graded course or whose marks have significantly declined halfway through Terms II and/or III (*January 12; April 26*) will receive an Progress Report. Progress Reports should also be written to reflect significant progress by a student. Forms are provided online, and a written comment is required.
3. Progress Reports must also be written for all students who are beginning a two-term course in Term II.
4. Neither teacher nor advisor comments should make direct reference to a pupil's future continuation at school; however, notice of a projected failure to meet departmental diploma requirements should be cited.

## **HOW TO DETERMINE EFFORT GRADES**

Upper School students receive effort grades with each term's grade and comment. There are four effort categories:

**SUPERIOR**—Student's observable effort significantly succeeds teacher expectations in most or all of the following areas: work process as assigned, completion of assigned work, care in following directions, use of opportunities for extra help or support, initiative in the use of supplemental materials, and use of class time (as distinguishable from "class participation").

**EFFECTIVE**—Student’s observable effort is in line with teacher expectations in the following areas: work process as assigned, completion of assigned work, care in following directions, use of opportunities for extra help or support, and use of class time (as distinguishable from “class participation”).

**INCONSISTENT**— Student’s observable effort meets teacher expectations inconsistently in one or more of the following areas: work process as assigned, completion of assigned work, care in following directions, use of opportunities for extra help or support, and use of class time (as distinguishable from “class participation”).

**POOR**—Student’s observable effort is significantly deficient in several or more of the following areas: work process as assigned, completion of assigned work, care in following directions, use of opportunities for extra help or support, and use of class time (as distinguishable from “class participation”).

In determining a student’s effort the key word is “observable”—as correct as you might be, it is not always easy to evaluate the amount of effort that has gone into a completed piece of work. If you are convinced that a student is not working up to his or her potential, find as many ways as possible to gather accurate data on your supposition.

The use of rubrics can also help a teacher break down aspects of complex projects to help evaluate specific aspects of the work—the sloppy collage with conceptually good content may be an example of poor effort, but it is hard to know for certain. Establish a rubric category for “neatness” or “craftsmanship,” and evaluate poorly in that category; no judgment on actual “effort” is necessary.

Effort grades are also considered in determining whether a student will be placed on Academic Warning or Academic Probation (see *Student–Parent Handbook*).

## HOW TO WRITE EFFECTIVE COMMENTS

WHAT PARENTS WANT TO KNOW:

- **Do you really know my child?**
- **Is my child doing the work?**
- **Is my child behaving properly?**
- **What is my child doing well?**
- **What can my child do to improve?**

*THINK PERFORMANCE (how the student has done), PROCESS (how well the student has mastered the skills of doing), and PROGRESS (how the student’s mastery has changed over time relative to expectations)!!*

GOOD COMMENT WORDS AND PHRASES:

*consistent* but give it a context: *consistently late, consistent effort, consistent level of achievement*; never just *a consistent student*

*reticent* but not *reticent to speak*; reticent implies that

*demonstrate* as in “*her term paper demonstrated her mastery of...*”

*competence and confidence* (a wonderful pair, but go easy with them)

*fine* although this word means “very good” (as a stamp or coin) to me, it can mean “just adequate” to someone else; use cautiously

*diligent*

*hard-working*

*thoughtful*

*engaged*

*active participant in discussion*

*active listener*

*as shown by*

*haphazard*

*shoddy*

*reluctant*

*tentative*

*passionate*

*mastery*

*eager*

*challenging*

*intellectually curious*

*creative*

*anxious to please, eager to please*

*(more) attentive (to directions)*

*difficulties with*

*conceptual material, abstract material,*

*concrete material*

Stay away from words that imply something about a child’s emotional state or capacity: average, brilliant, neurotic. But don’t be afraid to say that you have seen evidence of anxiety, tiredness, or distractedness (but make sure you’ve read the Learning Profile, which may refer to these).

If you are reporting catastrophe, it had better not come as a surprise in your comment: “Pollyanna seems to have skipped a number of classes” or “Pollyanna has done almost none of the assigned work this term” or “I am concerned that Pollyanna seems to have lost a great deal of weight since the year began.” Messages like these should have been conveyed *viva voce* a long time ago. Then you can say it again, but start with, “As we discussed on the telephone recently....” Then say something specific about how you are addressing the dire situation.

Sometimes one finds oneself with a theme for a set of comments: how the kids listen to one another, performance on a particular kind of work that seems especially revealing, whether students have begun to find their individual voices, or how they have demonstrated some aspect of intellectual curiosity, growth, or maturity.

Some of the best comments reveal very clearly the classroom culture of the teacher. Mentions of active listening and specific kinds of contributions to class discussion reveal a room rich in discussion. References to students’ performance as partners demonstrate that collaborative/cooperative learning is going on. What matters to you about the learning that goes on in your classroom, and how is each kid doing with regard to this special value. It’s okay to have values.

Don't sell yourself out: "Pollyanna is often a leader when the class becomes disruptive." Don't advertise class problems to parents, as this reflects badly on you.

Don't compare students: "Pollyanna is one of the few truly able students in this class." But praise is good: "Pollyanna brings a sparkling intellect to our discussions each day."

Do express surprise (positive or negative) or delight, but don't make it sound as though you had held low expectations: "Pollyanna surprised me with an examination that revealed effective review," but not "Pollyanna did much better than I might have expected" UNLESS you continue on "considering the haphazard way she had prepared for several earlier quizzes."

The rule of thumb should be that what you write about the student should never be shorter than what you write about the course ("the boilerplate," in Castorian).

Don't predict, unless you qualify: "Based on the progress she has made thus far, I would expect that Pollyanna will finish this course on a very positive note." NOT, "I know that Pollyanna will finish in the A range this year."

Acknowledge learning issues, but not as a negative factor: "Certain types of questions on the examination were a challenge for Pollyanna, but she grappled successfully with categories of problems that had nearly defeated her when she first encountered them." Or even, "Problems requiring reasoning from the general to the specific can be a challenge for Pollyanna, but [what you do to enable her to deal with them, or how she is learning in your class to deal with them]."

Above all be positive and, where possible, prescriptive. In serious situations I have written lists: "If Pollyanna is to find success consonant with her capacities, she will need to

- 1) arrive in class on time each day with all materials
  - 2) make an effort to check in with me before each test or major assignment
  - 3) make a point of contributing at least once to each day's discussion, and
  - 4) be more respectful in her interactions with classmates
- etc."

Some people feel that an enumeration of test and quiz grades is helpful. If you do this, try to make some generalizations about the kinds of material being tested and what the scores reveal; don't just write a laundry list.

## **HOW TO USE THE ON-LINE COMMENT SYSTEM**

### ***IN GENERAL***

Our Official Recommendation is that you write in MS Word, Google Docs, or another word processor, spell-check, then cut and paste each comment into the on-line template.

Use BLOCK style: Do NOT indent paragraphs, and leave a line space between paragraphs.

A year later, having spent her entire life in school, she decided to do the only logical thing . . . and apply to medical school.

She will, however, freeze up if you ask her what 8 times 7 is, because she never learned the multiplication table. And forget about grammar (“Me and him went over her house today” is fairly typical) or literature (“Who’s Faulkner?”). After a dozen years

You cannot use italics, underlining, or boldface in your comment. Use UPPERCASE for book titles and put anything else that needs highlighting in quotations.

Make sure you PREVIEW each comment to check on whether it actually fits the template and to make sure that it is in the proper form.

If you are proofreading someone else’s comments, please observe the following convention:

*If you need to repair a typo or other small error that does not involve changing the content of the comment, do so. If, however, you change or see the need to change the CONTENT of the comment, you should inform the writer.*

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL PARTICULARS**

The URL for the system is <<http://ms.beavercds.org>>. You will receive a Username and a password from the Director of Scheduling or the Registrar. You should change your password using the on-screen instructions.

Before you can begin entering data on the system you will need to go to the “Skills/Knowledge” section of the main screen and update the information under “Create Course Requirements” for each course. This will require changing the language in several categories under “Content Skills” and “Content Knowledge” as well as adding the “Term Description,” which is your summary of the work completed during the term.

You have a limited amount of text that can be entered for each comment before it spills over and is unreadable. Be sure to preview each comment for length and formatting and to do what may be necessary to manage paragraph breaks. In block style, there should be a single empty line between paragraphs and no indents. Sometimes it will require some experimentation to make the paragraph breaks behave.

### **UPPER SCHOOL PARTICULARS**

The URL for the system is <<http://academic.beavercds.org>>. You will receive a Username (usually a number) and a password from the Director of Scheduling or the Registrar. You should change your password using the on-screen instructions.

For a one-term course, remember to enter the course grade in both the Term Grade and Course Grade boxes.

You have a limited amount of text that can be entered for each comment before it spills over and will not appear in the printed comment. Be sure to preview each comment for length and formatting and to do what may be necessary to manage paragraph breaks. In block style, there should be a

single empty line between paragraphs and no indents. Sometimes it will require some experimentation to make the paragraph breaks behave.

### **FOR EVERYONE**

Once your grades and comments are entered (or possibly before; some department chairs like to collect drafts on Google Docs or in MS Word format), you should receive edited comments back from your department chair. The next step is to make the necessary corrections into the on-line system.

The next step is that comments are made available electronically to families at home, with printed YELLOW copies filed in the student's permanent file.

## **HOW TO WRITE EFFECTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Here are some suggestions from the College Counseling office about how to structure letters of recommendation and what to include in them:

- Limit the letter to one page. Given the volume of paperwork, admission officers tend to skim long letters.
- Write a draft of your letters over the summer. Keep a copy of your comments handy to help you recall anecdotes about your students.
- Begin your letter by explaining the context in which you know the student. Give the reader a brief overview of your class, emphasizing the depth and rigor. Feel free to add anything unique about Beaver too.
- Remember that you are providing an academic reference. Your primary focus should be the student's performance in your course(s). Try to give specific examples to illustrate your points. Refer to essays and research papers, lab reports and research, class discussion, interaction with classmates etc. Help the admission officer see the academic strengths and potential of the student.
- Do not highlight the student's weaknesses. That will be evident by what is not said. If you cannot be generally positive, please suggest that the student find another reference.
- The counselor letter and the student transcript will include information on the student's extracurricular activities so it is not necessary for you to repeat this information. However, you may have your own anecdotes to include.
- These letters are confidential. Do not show them to students.

It is important to the student and to the school that writers of recommendations adhere religiously to deadlines. **The College Counseling office requests that all teacher recommendations for seniors be submitted on or before October 15 in order to facilitate early or rolling applications.** Recommendations for secondary school admission are usually due by February 1 at the latest, although some may be due earlier.

## HOW TO BUILD YOUR MULTICULTURAL CAPACITY

*to help make Beaver a safe space for everyone*

### Things to know about the Beaver community:

- Students come from many ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds and from many kinds of families
- Some students have guardians, not parents—try using “family” instead of “parents”
- Students’ families speak over 20 different languages at home; some students cannot ask family members for help with certain kinds of work
- Some students work, and others are responsible for major child-care and other kinds of help at home
- Some of your students are gay and know it; many are questioning their own sexual orientation or gender identity; many of your students have GBLTQ family members, including parents/guardians, and friends

### Things you can do:

- Be aware of YOUR cultural capital (race, gender, age, class, religion, sexual orientation) and how it differs from that of your students and colleagues
- Don’t make assumptions about your students or their experiences; get to know them so you can keep the conversation real
- Don’t generalize about the experiences, characteristics, or attitudes of peoples; speak from your own experience in “I” statements
- *Don’t let students generalize about the experiences, characteristics, or attitudes of peoples or about nations, regions, communities, or neighborhoods*; STOP the conversation, back up, explore—this is your chance to turn ignorance into understanding and knowledge
- STOP any talk that involves language or commentary that is offensive; *address the issue on the spot, if you can*—and follow up
- Don’t make statements based on the assumption that everyone shares the same ideas or values about something—especially with regard to sexuality and religion; STOP conversations in which such statements are made, and address the issue
- Look for opportunities to bring the points of view of other cultures, etc., into your classroom
- Look for opportunities to be an ALLY—to stand with others in support of diversity and difference; build individual relationships
- Beware of inappropriate “cultural appropriation”: when students use cultural language, symbols, or other signifiers as decoration or entertainment rather than as tools for serious exploration and learning

## SMALL BUT IMPORTANT MATTERS: ATTENDANCE, PROCTORING, AND MAINTAINING A PRODUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT

### STUDENT ATTENDANCE

School begins officially for the school community at 8:00 A.M. Monday through Friday. First period teachers are expected enter attendance information in *PowerSchool* at the beginning of each class,

throughout the day.

Maintaining accurate records of attendance is absolutely essential. We are morally and legally responsible for knowing the whereabouts of our students. Teachers who neglect these procedures can subject the school to charges of negligence.

### ***MORNING MEETINGS***

All faculty are required to attend morning meetings and all assemblies and are expected to be on time. Faculty not assigned to a specific row should sit throughout the hall. Faculty are expected to announce information clearly and concisely and to help students do the same.

Many faculty members are assigned a row(s) in Bradley Hall in order to check attendance. An attendance slip should be turned in to the registrar following morning meeting.

### ***CLASS MEETINGS***

The Grade Dean coordinates attendance taken by faculty for submission to registrar. Faculty affiliated with specific classes are **expected** to attend class meetings.

### ***EXTRACURRICULAR SUPERVISION***

In addition to their academic responsibilities, full time faculty assist with extracurricular activities during the day, in the afternoon and proctor study halls. Faculty are involved in afternoon extracurricular activities (3:45–5:15 P.M.) or the equivalent during 2 of the 3 terms. Middle School extracurricular activities run from 1:40 to 3:40 P.M.

When an activity such as an athletic practice, contest, or an arts rehearsal or performance ends after normal school hours, the adult in charge is responsible for staying until all students are picked up.

### ***STUDENT LOUNGE AND FRONT ENTRYWAY***

The student lounge adjacent to the Green Gym is available for student relaxation. Although students may not take food from the dining room to eat in the lounge, students may purchase snacks from the vending machines for consumption in the student lounges. Faculty are encouraged to provide a presence in the student lounge by passing through whenever their business takes them to the lowest floor of the original building.

### ***UNASSIGNED STUDENT TIME***

In those periods when student time is unassigned, students should be vigorously encouraged to make the fullest and wisest use of our facilities. Generally available: dining hall (open 7:15–9:30 A.M.), library, and the student lounge. Available with permission and/or supervision: empty classrooms, design studio, art studios, athletic center, Bradley Hall, music room, VPAC lobby, and science labs.

All adults have the responsibility to see that students do not lounge or behave in an indecorous or offensive manner in the classroom corridors, first or second floor administrative areas, or the stairwells in any part of the building.

### ***LIBRARY AND DINING ROOM PROCTORING***

Throughout the year faculty may be assigned to proctor the library or the dining hall to insure

appropriate behavior. If, after a warning, a disturbance in the library continues, ask the student(s) to leave. In the dining hall, please remind students to clean their tables. Please report any inappropriate action to the appropriate Division Head, Dean of Students, and the advisor. Faculty will also be asked to proctor morning detention.

### ***USE OF THE BIBLIOTECH / LIBRARY***

Please do not send classes to the library unless you have arranged to do so with the librarian. Such classes should, with rare exceptions, be faculty proctored. All adults should check with the librarian on assignments that will require any special use of the library. Students may use the library until 4:45 P.M. Monday through Thursday, and until 3:30 P.M. on Friday.

### ***FACULTY MEETINGS***

Faculty and Administrators will be involved in faculty meetings each Monday morning at 8:00 A.M. Meetings begin promptly at 8 o'clock. At Beaver we believe faculty meetings are critically important if we are to execute our mission as a progressive school; therefore, we use classroom teaching time for these meetings. Faculty and Administrators are expected to treat the starting time of these meetings as they would the start of a class. Any announcements should be given to the Divisions Coordinator who will post them to the email system

### ***ACADEMIC AMBIANCE***

Each teacher is responsible for the appearance and general maintenance of an interesting, attractive and orderly classroom. Teachers should work with Department Heads to enhance the classroom and corridor environment.

### ***CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT***

When a discipline problem is so serious that a class cannot be continued (or a student "calming down" for a few minutes outside the door would not suffice), send for the respective Division Head, Dean of Students, or another administrator. Do not send the student out of class to an office or to wander the corridors for the rest of the period. Alternatively, a teacher may choose to escort the student to the appropriate location. In serious disruptions in the halls, library, dining room, etc., escort students to the reception office. The receptionist will contact the appropriate Division Director or Dean. It is absolutely essential for a teacher to respond to disruptive behavior and to report major disruptions to advisors and/or Division Directors. Upper School Teachers should issue Green Slips when gross misbehavior occurs.

### ***MIDDLE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE RESPONSE FORM***

The Discipline Response Form (DRF) is used when a student misbehaves. There are many ways and situations in which to use them. Often the threat of a DRF is all that is necessary, especially if you actually give one out early in the year. The form has a spot for you to write what happened and then a place for the student to write about her/his behavior.

Suggested Uses of the DRF:

These offenses are worthy of an immediate DRF:

1. Disrespectful or hurtful comments to teacher or peers
2. Swearing
3. Dangerous or unsafe behavior

These offenses accumulate strikes (usually three) that lead to a DRF:

1. Unexcused lateness to class
2. Coming to class with no writing utensil
3. Offensive classroom behavior.
4. Eating food, chewing gum, wearing a hat

#### DRF Procedure

1. Keep a supply of DRF forms in your room, readily available
2. Fill out the top of the form
3. Send students to the Middle School Director's office to write their part and discuss their behavior
4. Check in with MS Director and the student's advisor later in the day
5. Call the student's parents to let them know what happened
6. The student needs to get the DRF signed and return it to the M.S. Director the next day

## **YOUR OWN SPECIAL EVENTS: THE CALENDAR AND FIELD TRIPS**

### ***GETTING ON THE CALENDAR***

To add an event to the all school calendar, email the Divisions Coordinator with your request. The email should include the event name, date, reserved room you will be using, whether this event involves parents, students, grade levels, etc., whether it requires a food set up and whether it requires maintenance set up.

When you are planning a function or an event please use the following check list:

- Request that the function/event name, date, time and location be placed on the all school calendar by contacting the Divisions Coordinator.
- Book the room.
- If there is a room conflict, either choose another room, or work out the conflict with the individual who has reserved the room you would like to use.
- If you are requesting a food set up, you must submit a yellow catering request form to Sage Dining Services, the Divisions Coordinator, and Buildings & Grounds one week prior to the event. You can get one of these forms either from the Divisions Coordinator, in the faculty room or in the reception area. **All food service requests must be signed by the appropriate budget holder and include the 6-digit budget account number in order to be processed.**
- If you are requesting a set-up from buildings and grounds, you must submit a green maintenance request form to buildings and grounds and the Divisions Coordinator, at least one week in advance. You can get one of these forms either from the Divisions Coordinator or in the reception area.

### ***FIELD TRIP PROCEDURE***

Upper School field trips should be scheduled during the 120-minute blocks when possible. Field trips that extend beyond class time will require the approval of Department Heads. Follow these steps:

1. Obtain approval from your Department Head.
2. Complete Field Trip form. Be sure to include list of students attending. Submit 2 copies of the form to the Divisions Coordinator's office.
3. Please make and discuss transportation and fee arrangements with the Divisions Coordinator. All transportation will be scheduled through LocalMotion.
4. Please post a list of students on the FIELD TRIP bulletin board in the faculty lounge.
5. If trip extends beyond your class time, please submit Field Trip Form to your Department Head because the trip will require Department Heads approval. Do not finalize plans until approval of Department Heads is granted.

***PLEASE NOTE these restrictions on the scheduling of field trips:***

- With rare exceptions no Upper School field trip should be taken during the two weeks preceding term end examinations.
- No Middle School or Upper School field trips should be taken during the two weeks immediately following Spring break (Admission visit days) or on days with scheduled Admission events during the school day.



## 5. SOME RULES FOR TEACHERS TO KNOW

### RULES PERTAINING TO EVERYONE

Basic school rules are spelled out in the online *Student–Parent Handbook*. Teachers should be aware, however, that most rules of general behavior and deportment should be considered as applying to everyone in the community. Some of these are:

- The entire campus is a **No Smoking** area. This should also be construed to include neighboring properties and streets.
- No hats or other headwear should be worn in the buildings of the campus at any time; religious headwear is of course excepted from this.
- No food or beverages should be consumed in the hallways or meeting areas. Water may be carried but not consumed in the halls. *Teachers should refrain from bringing coffee, etc., into Bradley Hall or other meeting spaces; students may not eat or drink in classrooms except on the occasion of a class party or the like.* Teachers may consume food and beverages (neatly) in department offices, the Faculty Room, or in classrooms when no students are present. Teachers are expected to clean up after themselves, including returning dishes and silverware to the kitchen dish area.
- Student cell phones should not be used during classes.

### ESSENTIAL RULES PERTAINING TO STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Consistent teacher vigilance in responding to a few aspects of student behavior will make everyone's life at least a little easier. The big ones are:

- **Absence and lateness.** Practice with regard to the reporting of student absence or lateness—whether this involves class, community meetings, advisory meetings, afternoon activities, or practices—is evolving. *The more assiduously teachers follow the prescribed procedures for reporting, the more likely that vigilance and accountability can combine to have a deterrent effect.* Take questions and concerns to the Dean of Students.
- **Disruptive, rude, or defiant behavior; persistent violation of minor rules.** For this kind of behavior the usual penalties are **Green Slips** and **D.R.F.s**. These are the mechanisms by which the Upper and Middle Schools, respectively, respond to student misbehavior of a relatively serious sort, including behavior in class; their use is explained in the opening faculty meetings each year. In both cases, the student should not be given the penalty without there having been some conversation with the student about the behavior or actions(s) being cited for the penalty. Teachers should make the awarding of a Green Slip or D.R.F. the occasion for at least a short and pointed clarifying conversation with the student. Avoid being drawn into excessive argumentative discussion.
- **Off-Campus.** Seniors (unless their privileges have been suspended or revoked) may leave campus on foot or in cars during their free periods—ONLY after signing out at the Reception desk. They need to drive safely on campus and to park vehicles tidily, and they may take no one with them who is not another senior whose privileges are in force. Teachers

encountering students who are not seniors off campus or leaving (or returning to) campus should report the sighting immediately to the Dean of Students; if possible, they should also have a conversation with the students involved.

The only exception to this is Juniors, who may sign out and leave campus on foot only after Spring Break if they have a signed parent/guardian permission form on file.

Teachers should be vigilant and consistent in the enforcement of this rule. Above all, the school needs to be able to account for every student during the school day and may be held responsible if they are not and some extraordinary situation arises.

- **Drugs and alcohol.** While the nature of the conversations we are having with students around these issues is evolving, the flat bottom line is that the use or possession of drugs (including alcohol and tobacco and prescription drugs outside the parameters of the prescription) is a very serious violation of school rules. Teachers with suspicions or concerns should take these to the Dean of Students or a member of the counseling staff immediately.
- **Firearms and explosives.** Presence of these represents a very serious violation of school rules as well as the law. Teachers with suspicions or concerns should take these to the Dean of Students or any administrator immediately. Obviously, this pertains to all members of the school community, including faculty and staff.

## SOME POLICIES ESPECIALLY FOR TEACHERS

The *Employee Handbook*, published on line each autumn, is the final arbiter and the contractual and legal last word on issues related to employment policies and expectations for teachers, but here are a few highlights to remember:

- **Hours.** Teachers are expected to arrive on campus by 7:45 A.M. each day; if there is a scheduled obligation (parent meeting, trip departure, first day of school), this may be earlier on occasion. Teachers should remain on campus at least until the conclusion of their final obligation of the day; *in no case should a teacher leave earlier than 4:00 P.M.*
- **Dress.** Teacher dress should be neat and professional.
- **Attendance at Meetings.** Teachers are expected to attend **all** class meetings of the grade with which they are affiliated, **all** school and division meetings, **all** faculty and department meetings, and 7:30 A.M. morning meetings at which their presence is requested.

If you think that you might have to miss any one of these obligations, you should check with your immediate supervisor (usually your department chair) or with whoever is in charge of the event, arranging for substitute coverage if appropriate.

- **Tutoring.** No Beaver teacher will tutor or provide educational services of any sort for any Beaver student for pay, remuneration, or compensation in cash, goods, or services of any kind at any time during which the teacher is employed at Beaver and while the student is enrolled at Beaver. This would represent a clear conflict of interest.
- **Leaving campus during the day.** Teachers needing to leave campus during the day must inform a supervisor and sign out (and back in) on the white board in the Reception office.
- **Absence.** A teacher should inform her or his supervisor (usually a department chair) as soon as it becomes known that s/he will be absent. The teacher should make every effort to prepare materials for a substitute; departmental practices may vary with regard to how this is done.

**Teachers should absolutely avoid commitments away from school that would occur on Admission visiting days, Parent Conference days, or Back-to-School night.**

- **Gifts.** Beaver does not have a faculty gift policy, but teachers should be circumspect in accepting gifts of more than incidental value from students, parents, or guardians.
- **Use of facilities.** While teachers may consider themselves as having the privilege of using the campus, there are also scheduled events in which parts of the campus are used by non-Beaver groups, and faculty members should defer to these groups.

A teacher wishing to use campus facilities for personal activities should clear any such use with the Director of Finance and Operations.

- **Technology.** In general, teachers should not expect any kind of technical support for personally owned technology. Teachers may sign out Beaver-owned technology—digital video cameras; digital still cameras; LCD projectors; a small number of laptop computers—for classroom use.

Beaver does make possible the purchase of technology through a payroll deduction plan. See the Director of Technology and/or the Business Office for details.

Other policies pertaining specifically to teaching are spelled out elsewhere in this book.

## HOW TO TOOT YOUR OWN HORN

If you've spent any time on the Beaver website (and surely you have if you're a new hire!), you know that it's a great resource for prospective teachers and prospective families to find out what makes Beaver different from other schools. Now that you'll be contributing to the Beaver difference yourself through your work with students inside and outside the classroom, you should get to know the folks in our communications office (located directly opposite the school's receptionist and mail room). You may be reluctant to toot your own horn, but they are more than happy to toot it on your behalf!

Our communications staff writes all the stories that go on the website, including those in the section called the "Beaver mashUp," which highlights interesting class projects with multimedia examples of student work. If you have a special guest coming to visit, let Communications know. If you are taking students on a field trip, borrow a digital camera or Flip video cam (available from the Tech Department), document your trip and share the experience (photos, video, a few descriptive words) with Communications. If students are posting cool artwork, reflections, or videos on your class website or blog, tell Communications where to find them. If you are wondering whether what you're doing is "newsworthy," just send Communications an e-mail and ask if they are interested – it's their job to make you and the school look good, so don't be shy!



## 6. TROUBLESHOOTING STUDENT ACADEMIC BEHAVIOR

### HOW TO UNDERSTAND STUDENT LEARNING DIFFERENCES

For the past decade students with identified learning difficulties have been eligible for certain accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Students with identified learning disabilities at Beaver are still expected to complete all aspects of the curriculum and to participate in all academic and other activities. These students may have very high ability levels.

Teachers should be aware that some students receive specific accommodations. They should be aware

- that some students may need extended time (E.T.) when working on tests or quizzes. This sometimes requires some creative planning as to when E.T. students will have an opportunity to complete work. There are also security issues that need to be taken into account; the simple solutions include collecting the work between work sessions and having the student continue work in a different color ink or lead.
- that some students are uncomfortable reading aloud, either from their own work or from a text. It is all right to honor the request of a student who wishes to “pass” during an oral reading exercise, although you may wish to arrange for the student to read to you privately in order to assess the degree of the student’s problem. You might make a note of the student’s name and check with the Academic Services department on how best to support the student..
- that some students may need to leave a classroom for water or a bathroom break. This is common practice at Beaver, although a few students use this as a way of helping themselves refocus on classroom activities. *This does not mean that you have to allow students to wander the classroom or the halls.* That is NOT a Beaver-sanctioned accommodation.

If you have any questions or concerns about a student’s request for some special treatment or privilege, ask a member of the Academic Services department.

### HOW TO GUIDE STUDENTS IN SEEKING HOMEWORK HELP

#### *A Brief Guide to What’s OK and What’s Not for Students, Families, and Tutors*

Homework is assigned at Beaver to help students master the skills and information they need for academic success. Sometimes the work is hard, and long, and sometimes it feels easy.

When homework is hard, students are encouraged to ask for help. Family members, tutors, and even friends can be great resources, and sometimes these helpers can assist students in reaching new

levels of understanding—just the point of a good homework assignment! But there are limits to how much help, and what kind, students should be receiving from others.

The Beaver *Student–Parent Handbook* suggests the following as appropriate kinds of help that a student can receive on a homework assignment:

- **Referring students to resources where they might find answers;**
- **Identifying errors to focus students' efforts;**
- **Asking questions about the assignment which may help students clarify their ideas about approaches;**
- **Explaining underlying rules or principles which would help students formulate their own answers.**

**The ultimate goal and effect of any assistance should be to enable students to master the material. Students should indicate when they have received assistance on an assignment. Because teachers need to see students' mistakes as well as their successes, resist the impulse to merely give answers or make corrections.**

Good and appropriate homework assistance can also include listening to a student read a paper or rehearse a presentation and offering modest amounts of constructive criticism. Individual teachers and departments will vary in their specific policies, but in general helpers who are inclined to copy-edit a student's paper (proofreading and offering many suggestions) should refrain from doing so. **At the least, any commentary by a helper on a student's work should be in writing and should be included with the work when it is turned in.**

Perhaps most important, it is critical that students become comfortable in the habit of citing sources. This includes "live" assistance, or even assistance from an on-line homework help service. **A student who receives help on a piece of homework should, as a matter of course, include with the assignment a "bibliography" listing the names of those who have provided substantial assistance.** This is both good manners and a matter of academic integrity; there's no shame in acknowledging that a tutor or a family member helped with writing a paper or solving a set of questions. However, trouble can arise when work is clearly not the students' own and yet there is no acknowledgment of help.

Homework should be a learning experience, and in the end the teacher must be able to see clearly what the student has truly learned; only then can the teacher continue to work to meet the individual learning needs of the student.

The student who comes to rely on a helper for success is being cheated out of his or her own learning, and that, we can all agree, is not what we are trying to accomplish here.

## **ALL ABOUT TUTORING AT BEAVER**

Students are encouraged to seek extra help from teachers during unassigned time during the school day. Students should make appointments and are generally expected to keep such appointments without reminders; occasionally a student will need to be hunted down and brought in for extra

help, and teachers should not be shy about using this method when a student is in real danger of failure and is resistant to gentle invitation.

For a student requiring more assistance than a teacher's schedule can allow and for whom the extra help system has not provided sufficient support, sessions with a tutor from outside the school community can be arranged during the school day. Although a charge for such services is arranged between the tutor and family, the request for tutoring should go to the learning specialist in the appropriate division, who will arrange for tutoring to take place. Tutors will contact teachers and request information or feedback in order to enhance communication. There is a financial aid budget for tutoring support so that all students may have access to the service. **Suggestions regarding a particular student's need for tutoring should be discussed with the Academic Services department before they are made to families, and every effort should be made to remediate a student's deficiency through extra help before enlisting the services of a tutor.**

Effective tutoring support involves effective communication among the tutor, the student, the teacher, and the family. It also involves the tutor's having a clear understanding of what is required and the degree to which support is needed and appropriate. Teachers should address concerns about a particular tutoring situation should to a member of the Academic Services department.

**Teachers should also remember that it is not permitted for a Beaver teacher to tutor any Beaver student for any kind of consideration or remuneration.**

## **ALL ABOUT LEARNING PROFILES**

A learning profile is created by the Director of Academic Services or the Middle School Learning Specialist for students with academic or psychological testing on file at the school. The profile will include a summary of the testing along with accommodations that the school will provide. Profiles can be found in the student's folder in Power School (xxxCustom Screens "LP"). Teachers only have access to the profiles of the students they teach to protect privacy.

Teachers should familiarize themselves with the contents and especially the recommendations contained in the Learning Profiles of any students they teach or advise. Teachers should be prepared to address specific learning-related issues in parent conferences and other communication, and teachers must be scrupulous in making certain that students receive all accommodations (usually and particularly extended time) to which students with Learning Profiles may be entitled.

## **HOW TO USE THE ENRICHMENT CENTER**

The Enrichment Center is part of the Academic Services department and consists of a staffed workroom where students can receive help on almost any kind of academic issue that does not require in-depth subject-matter expertise. The goal of the Center is to help students implement efficient organizational, time management, editing, and questioning skills to facilitate students taking

responsibility for their own learning. The Center is staffed by an adult member of the Academic Services department and at times, a small cadre of academically accomplished volunteer students.

Listed below are three different categories of students who use the Enrichment Center and how the student can be supported at the Center:

**Required Students:** Students referred by the Academic team to attend a regularly scheduled weekly appointment that is mandatory due to their academic performance. Missed appointments will be treated as a class cut and will result in a Green Slip.

- The Enrichment Center instructor can work on strengthening areas of weakness. At times, this may mean a closely supervised study hall in the Center to work independently but students will have access to the instructor, and sometimes this will mean more direct instruction or feedback from the instructor. This may include working on study skills, time management skills, or organizational skills.

**Referred Students:** Students referred by teachers and specific concerns have been indicated to the Enrichment Center staff so that needs can be addressed at the Center. Teachers will follow a referral process either through email communication with the Enrichment Center staff or a form available at the Faculty Room and in the Enrichment Center. Students should have a clear understanding of why a teacher has referred them to the Center and the nature of the work they should be doing there.

- The Enrichment Center can support these referred students by working on study skills, organizational, and time management of content. If content related questions arise, staff at the Center will work towards having students formulate questions and encourage students to follow up with their teacher or tutor.

**Drop-In Students:** Students who typically need support on a particular assignment.

- The Enrichment Center can support students on written assignments by a pencil edit before handing in their paper, indicate focus of editing (i.e., grammar, sentence structure, content) as well as the specific requirements of an assignment.

For *all* students seen at the Enrichment Center, the staff will communicate with advisors and teachers the type of support students received.

## **WHAT TO DO ABOUT LATE AND MISSING WORK**

Teachers should refer to specific departmental policies relating to late and missing work, but in general the following conventions should be observed:

- The key to compliance in having students turn work in on time is your own consistency. Whatever policy you establish, stand by it.
- Be accurate and up-to-date in your inventory and record-keeping involving collected student work; this is a corollary to the consistency issue.  
“Missing” work that is said to have been handed in can be a BIG headache for the teacher, especially if s/he has not done an inventory—and responded to the “missing”-ness—almost at the moment of collection, or if any doubt lives in the teacher’s mind.

Collecting papers via e-mail or by hand is best; work left on an untended desk or in-box is vulnerable. Ask colleagues to initial any work they put in your Faculty Room mailbox at a student's behest. "I asked a teacher to put it [*missing work*] in your mailbox" is often another prelude to a difficult situation.

- *Late work is work that has been handed in late. It is only late after you have it in your possession; before that time it is missing.*
- Missing work is work that is not in your possession; this can also include tests and quizzes that need to be made up.
- A missing work policy should also include what to do about missed tests or quizzes, and it should also address the issue of the reason for which such tests or quizzes might have been missed. A policy that caps the highest achievable grade on a made-up test or quiz (one day late—90%; two days—80%; three days—70%; four days—60%; more—automatic NP) is one way to address this.
- A grade of zero (0) has a powerful and usually unbalancing and even unjust effect on a student's course grade. Use this weapon sparingly and thoughtfully, and never because you are just irritated with the kid. Zero is the teacher's nuclear option for missing work, although at times its use may be justified.
- In general the kinds of reasons for uncompleted work that become valid excuses are those presented in advance of the due date; *ex post facto* declarations about uncompleted work should be heard with some skepticism. (Obviously real emergencies or tragedies are something else altogether.)
- Penalties for late or missing work that count down by days (1/3 of a grade for each day late, for example) should probably have a drop-dead date after which missing work receives a stronger penalty than late work—NP for terminally late, perhaps zero (0) for missing.
- Do not permit a situation to reach the point where a student is at risk of not passing a course because of late or missing work UNLESS you have done all that you can to forestall disaster, including
  - communicating the precise parameters of the situation and the potential for problems to the student, the advisor, and the family *in a timely way*
  - using Late Work Study or other available opportunities as a place to park the student to complete the missing work
  - communicating the precise parameters of the situation and the potential for problems to the student, the advisor, and the family *in a timely way (Did we say that twice?)*
- Understand that there are circumstances (illness, serious family crisis) under which a particular student may be unable to complete work for long periods of time. It is the school's practice to consider such situations on a case-by-case basis. The point is to help the child learn and not to focus on the uncompleted work. While we do not modify curriculum for students, there may be circumstances under which the nature or number of assessments needs to be adjusted to allow a student to heal or to make it through a difficult time. Patience and love are in order here, even more in order than a late work policy.

## HOW TO USE LATE WORK STUDY

Late Work Study is a proctored afternoon study hall for Upper School students who have defaulted in the completion of daily homework, who have long-term work outstanding, or who have submitted work that must be re-done.

Late Work Study takes place in the Library from 3:45 to 4:45 P.M. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Students can be assigned to the study on the day of the default; use one of the triplicate forms found by the left-hand copier in the Faculty Room.

Students must attend Late Work Study (LWS) unless they have a game, a dress rehearsal or performance, or a specific parentally-approved obligation that requires them to leave early. LWS takes precedence over athletic practice or drama rehearsal, and coaches and directors may in fact be unhappy about a student's absence—this unhappiness should be a disincentive for students to be behind-hand in their work.

Students assigned to LWS are expected to remain for the full hour. If they complete the “late” work before 4:45, they need to find something else to do.

If we are all consistent in assigning students to LWS we can provide real support for those students who need accountability around meeting obligations.

Late Work Study is not intended as a punishment. It is, however, intended as a firm reminder to all students that they need to complete their work on time, and to the best of their ability. An angry coach or a dismayed, impatient cast (or just the loss of an hour's free time) may feel like a punishment, but the object is to help students see the importance of doing what must be done.

Please use this tool for helping students learn to help themselves.

## HOW TO KEEP YOUR STUDENTS HONEST and yourself sane and happy

Much has been written about the amount of student academic dishonesty that schools are seeing. While plagiarism, cheating, and abuse of the collaborative process seem to be less prevalent at Beaver, we all need to be on our guard. Here are some ideas for reducing students' opportunities to succumb to temptation and for coping on the rare occasions when they do.

### *I. BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU MEAN BY ACADEMIC DISHONESTY*

The more you inform your students about the meaning and consequences of plagiarism, cheating, and academic dishonesty, the less chance that you will find yourself having to explain this after the fact.

It is especially important that you explain to students *why* these behaviors are wrong—that failure to attribute properly robs a creator of credit and sometimes money, that work completed with the improper aid of others will not lead to understanding, and that abuse of the collaborative

process is simply unfair to others. Students know this, and they have heard it all before, but it is important that they hear it again directly from *you*.

Here are some broad definitions of various kinds of academic dishonesty, from the Beaver History Department:

- **Plagiarism** is the unauthorized or unacknowledged use of ideas or words that are not one's own in order to seek an academic benefit.
- **Cheating** is the unauthorized use of notes or the use of information gathered in a dishonest fashion in order to seek an academic benefit.
- **Abuse of the collaborative work process** involves the reliance of an individual upon the efforts of others to seek an academic benefit to which her or his own efforts do not entitle her or him. The collaborative work process involves the principle of the sharing of an equal burden of thought and effort among students assigned or authorized to work together.

It is worth your time as a teacher to review these in detail. If you plan on assigning group projects or recommending that students work collaboratively on homework assignments or when studying for tests, it is imperative that you spell out your expectations for what is proper in such circumstances.

It is also a very good idea to review with your students the degree to which you will allow them to receive outside help on their work—from parents, tutors, and friends. You might want to share with students the “How to Guide Students in Seeking Homework Help” section of this handbook (page 51) and also included in a slightly different form in the *Student–Parent Handbook*.

## **II. DESIGN WORK THAT MAKES IT HARD FOR STUDENTS TO RECEIVE IMPROPER ASSISTANCE**

Putting together assignments and projects that stymie attempts to cheat or plagiarize is not so terribly difficult, and, best of all, it involves curriculum design that is very much in alignment with the best and most advanced principles of good teaching. There are many ways to think about this; not all will fit your style or your needs at a given moment, but in the aggregate they will benefit you and your students.

- First and foremost, wherever possible, **DEVELOP YOUR OWN ASSIGNMENTS**. And when you base these assignments on learning goals and/or original or unusual (“non-canonical,” for example) materials that are unique to your goals and your content, it will be much harder for the wayward or desperate student to go on line for help. Try to find ways to put a unique “take” on a particular topic on which you are asking students to work.
- Ask students to do **COMPARATIVE WORK**. The Beaver curriculum and approach to many subjects is unique, and when one asks students to draw comparisons between content elements or to analyze different topics in parallel or tandem, the chances that the student can find similar work decreases by an order of magnitude.
- **PROCESS, PROCESS!!—CHECK IN, CHECK IN!!** If the first and only time that you ever see a piece of work, particularly something major, is when the student hands in a final draft, you have lost valuable opportunities to check in on the student's progress and offer feedback—that is the point of the drafting and check-in process. Just as importantly, though, you have made it much easier for the student to wait until the last minute and then perform some untoward act of desperation.

Design major assignments with absolute way-stations at which students will show you progress on the work they have done, and make these intermediate stages part of the project evaluation. If you do not see work along the way, make the student pay a known

and moderately severe academic penalty (as well as the penalty of not having the opportunity to receive feedback).

For smaller projects, at least ask students to hand in all drafts with the completed work; that way you can at least glance to see whether the final edition came together as part of a process or in a way that is suspiciously *sui generis*.

- Have students complete **WORK IN CLASS**, if there is a way to do so without sacrificing time you would like to spend on other things. The level playing field of handwritten work on lined paper may also give you some important information as to how each student works and learns. And of course, be vigilant as students are work.
- **ORGANIZE AND KEEP TRACK** of all work handed in. This is essential. The more certain you can be of who has handed in work and when, the less likely it will be that a desperate student will resort to dishonesty either to put one over on a less than perfectly organized teacher or to be able to sustain a claim of “I put that on your desk.” Check on collected work immediately and chase down laggards right away.

**An excellent way to collect work is via the Beaver e-mail system.** You may assume that all students have access to a computer at home and that all students have Beaver e-mail accounts. You may require students should submit work via the Google system. (If your students claim ignorance here, reserve the computer lab one day and have someone from the Tech department come and help you orient your students. *Do not accept work e-mailed from personal accounts! This may expose you to some personal liabilities that you do not even want to contemplate!*)

- **LOOK AT COLLECTED WORK IMMEDIATELY**, and correct and return it as soon as possible. The benefits here are obvious.

### **III. BE VIGILANT WHEN GIVING TESTS OR OTHER IN-CLASS ASSESSMENTS**

On test days do not plan on just burying yourself in correcting while the students beaver away. Pay attention; set the room up as if you were serious about the matter at hand. See also “How to Invigilate,” page 39 of this handbook.

There have been numerous articles on ingenious cheating techniques developed by students, some of which involve technology—cell phones, PDAs, programmable calculators—and others of which involve sheer cleverness—water bottle labels and the like. Try not to become the victim of subterfuge, old or new.

Here again, count and check work as students hand it in. The “lost” test is the bane of teachers, and the less opportunity students have to misrepresent circumstances, the more secure you can be that they are doing their own work to the best of their own abilities.

### **IV. WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT THAT SOMETHING IS AWRY**

The steps here are simple at Beaver—cut and dried, per the *Student–Parent Handbook* and school practice:

1. Check the facts, and check again. Be as certain as you can be that something is truly wrong with the work you are looking at, or with the work that is missing, or with the excuse you are hearing.
2. Check the work, if you can, against other student work or against other obvious sources. Written work that is too good to be true—that is substantially better than other work you have seen from a student—may be the result of many things, not all of which are intentional plagiarism. Consider:

- Might the student have received too much help from a friend, parent, or tutor? Before calling the student a plagiarist or a cheater (in point of fact, using such labels is highly unprofessional; label behavior—and sparingly—not the child), figure out if you can solve this problem with a very firm conversation with the student and possibly the helper.
  - Might the student actually have achieved a kind of intellectual breakthrough? Such things happen, folks, and we ought to be ready to celebrate, not punish. Check this by quizzing the student on the content you find suspicious.
  - Too much unattributed Wikipedia or Microsoft Word Thesaurus? A problem, and depending on the student’s age perhaps even a very big one. Possibly a teachable moment, but if you do not think so, then proceed to Step 3.
  - Too good to be true? It might be. For written work you can type suspect passages into Google; a match is a bad thing. If you feel overcome by the crime-fighting urge, there are even higher-tech systems, but, like computer anti-virus software, cheat-check technology is often a step behind malefactors who stand to make money off the crime. This might be a good moment to share your suspicions with your department head, as in Step 3.
  - Problems in the collaborative process are usually much more difficult to identify and to pin down. The more clearly you have articulated your expectations and had students spell out their specific roles and responsibilities in collaborative work, the easier it will be for you to spot problems and call the right students to account.
3. (*And sooner is much better than later for this.*) If you are satisfied that something untoward and probably intentional has taken place, then take your concern directly to your department head. Save evidence by photocopying, printing, or whatever else you need to do. At some point early on you will need to confront the student. The next step is to involve the division director. The system must run its course at this point.

**A thought on the disciplinary process here:** Academic dishonesty represents at least one and probably more than one bad decision on the part of the student, who must be held accountable for this. However, the teacher needs to be pretty clear that s/he has done everything possible by way of *prevention* to make the process into one that is truly righteous for all concerned.

This is not to say that a teacher’s error offsets a clear-cut case, but a teacher’s error makes it much harder to make a disciplinary process into the powerful educational experience that it should be.

## HOW TO USE THE “INCOMPLETE” GRADE

Students are expected to complete all assigned work by the due date specified by the teacher; late work will typically be marked down according to departmental policy. If a student has not completed all assigned work at the close of a term (or the end of the year in the case of a final examination), **work not completed may be assigned a grade of 0 (zero) for the purpose of grade calculation.**

Under certain circumstances a teacher may grant a student a specific extension. Such an extension should be for no more than one week after the day on which grades are due to the department head unless a different timetable is deemed necessary owing to extraordinary circumstances.

An extension may be granted only in unusual circumstances, such as if

- the student has missed opportunities for classroom learning, research, collaborative work, or consultation with the teacher due to excused absence from school.
- a personal situation that has made it difficult for the student to work effectively outside of school; an extension granted under these circumstances would typically require the endorsement of the student's advisor or a member of the Counseling Department in consultation with the appropriate Division Director.
- the student has missed a test, quiz, or examination due to excused absence from school.

Extensions should not be granted

- to enable students to re-take tests or to re-write or re-do work that has already been graded in order to earn a higher grade; such work should have been completed prior to the end of the term.
- to allow students to make up work missed due to participation in extracurricular activities, except in exceptional circumstances with the endorsement of the appropriate Department Head.
- to allow students to make up work—including research, collaborative work, tests, quizzes, or examinations—missed due to unexcused or unauthorized absences.

During the time that a student is making up work under a granted extension, the student's work for the term will be assigned a grade of *Incomplete*; in the final term of a year-long course, the calculation of a final course will also be delayed and noted as *Incomplete*. The teacher will enter this grade on the student's comment.

When a grade of *Incomplete* has been assigned, the specified deadline for completing work should be made known to the student, the student's family, and the student's advisor by the date on which grades are due to be turned in. The work to be completed should also be specified at this time.

If the specified work is turned in by the stated deadline, the teacher will determine the student's grade and enter the final grade on a revised comment for inclusion on the student's report card.

If the specified work is not completed by the stated deadline, it will be assigned a grade commensurate with the work done (if any) and the final term grade (and/or course grade) will be calculated on that basis. The teacher will then enter the final grade on a revised comment for inclusion on the student's report card.

# 7. THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## OVERVIEW

All professional development at Beaver is designed to support and reinforce the mission of the school and the goals of the strategic plan. Scheduled professional development activities are also designed to complement and support all aspects of the teacher evaluation system.

### For New Hires

- ◆ *iL@B*—5-day workshop (August 22–26) to orient new faculty on aspects of progressive educational practice at Beaver; also includes general orientation to school practices and culture as well as the opportunity for new faculty to work directly with department leaders on curriculum and lesson plans

### For All Teachers

- ◆ *Special Summer Projects* (see p. 72)—supports collaborative curriculum work by teachers during vacation periods
- ◆ *Full-Faculty Professional Workshops*—on topics of professional interest to all faculty members in support of the Mission and goals of the school
- ◆ *Departmental Retreats*—All departments may take at least one one-day retreat during the year for the purpose of meeting to work toward departmental and school strategic goals.
- ◆ *Other opportunities*—Faculty wishing to attend off-campus workshops may consult with the Assistant Head of School. In addition, the academic administration may invite members of the faculty to participate in appropriate professional development experiences.

## RESOURCES

There are a many resources available to Beaver teachers interested in expanding their professional knowledge and awareness:

### Professional Development Library

*Available in the Faculty Conference Room.* Books and periodicals relating to aspects of teaching and curriculum, including a number of study and learning kits on topics such as multiple-intelligence learning, constructivist teaching, curriculum design, and assessment.

In addition to this library, the school also subscribes to *Independent School* (library), to *Education Week* (in the faculty room), and to several professional journals relating to specific subject areas and technology (faculty room, office of the Assistant Head of School).

### iTeach

The iTeach Ning (<http://iteach.ning.com/>) is maintained by Beaver faculty as a resource on teaching, learning, and professional development. All teachers should become members of iTeach and check it regularly for news, events, opportunities, or other information relating to the work of teaching and learning at Beaver.

### **Listserv(e)s**

Listservs are email discussion groups focused on specific topic areas. Subscribers may post queries of their own or replies and comments on existing discussion topics, or “threads.” They can be valuable as ways for teachers to keep abreast of developments or issues in education in general, in their subject areas, or in other areas in which they have an interest.

Faculty members are urged to join appropriate listservs relating to subject matter or to other areas of professional interest. Subject-specific listservs are listed below.

Of general interest to teachers is the ISED-L listserv, an email list through which independent school educators can share concerns and ideas or put forth inquiries relating to all aspects of policy and practice.

Subscribe to the ISED-L list by sending a message with no subject line or signature to

[LISTSERV@LISTSERV.SYR.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@LISTSERV.SYR.EDU)

The content of the message should be

subscribe ISED-L yourfirstname yourlastname

Past ISED discussion can be searched at the listserv archive at  
[http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv\\_Archives](http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv_Archives)

This site also allows searches of a number of other educators’ listservs.

There are dozens of high quality listservs relating to subject matter areas, pedagogy, and school policies. Most generate a readable number of messages each day, and all provide a way for individual teachers to gather information or suggestions from peers or just to track what is happening in your field.

Here are several places for teachers to begin looking for good listservs:

**The Arts** — <http://www.naea-reston.org/ataglance-links.html>

**College Counseling** — <http://www.nacac.com/elist.html>

**English and English-language literature** — <http://www.ncte.org>

**History, cultural studies, and social sciences** — <http://www2.h-net.msu.edu>

**Mathematics** — <http://forum.swarthmore.edu/join.forum.html>

**Modern Languages** — <http://www.cortland.edu/flteach>  
[http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/discussions/nifl-esl/subscribe\\_nifl-esl.html](http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/discussions/nifl-esl/subscribe_nifl-esl.html)

**The Sciences** — [http://pgw.org/images/education\\_lists.htm](http://pgw.org/images/education_lists.htm)

**Technology in the classroom** — <http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~edweb/>

And for more **lists of lists** — <http://privateschool.about.com/cs/maillinglists1/index.htm>

A valuable resource for teachers is the Independent School Educators Network, a social networking site with a number of active discussions and user groups. The sign-up page is <http://isenet.ning.com>.

### **Helpful Offices at Beaver**

Part of the job of the Assistant Head of School, the Hiatt Center, and the Technology department is to connect teachers with appropriate resources to help them in their practice. Whether you seek general information on teaching and pedagogy, ideas about curriculum design, or to be put in contact with expert resources outside of Beaver, feel free to ask the assistance of the appropriate Deans.

### **Membership in Professional Organizations**

Funding is available for each member of the Beaver faculty to hold a basic membership in one professional organization relating to teaching in her or his discipline. Examples of such organizations are

- The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
- The International Society for Technology in Education
- The National Art Education Association
- The National Council for History Education
- The National Council for the Social Studies
- The National Council of Teachers of English
- The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- The National Science Teachers Association

Teachers should approach their department head or the Assistant Head of School in reference to membership.

## **FUNDING OF ACADEMIC COURSEWORK AND CONFERENCES**

Beaver will reimburse employees for credit-bearing academic coursework toward a first master's degree (or equivalent) at accredited institutions of higher learning at a rate of 75% of course cost to a maximum of \$600 per course and a fiscal year maximum of two (2) courses per individual.

At the discretion of the Assistant Head of School, Beaver will reimburse faculty members for course or conference fees for academic or professional courses or conferences directly related to the individual's responsibilities at Beaver but not directly related to the school's immediate strategic goals, including course or conference fees, travel and expenses, up to \$350. The reimbursement rate is \$500 for courses or conferences occurring between June 15 and August 20.

For course work undertaken at the school's behest for contractual reasons relating to professional development needs, Beaver will reimburse all course expenses—tuition, books, and course fees. The school will also reimburse those enrolled in such courses travel and living expenses in such cases, up to \$600 per person per fiscal year.

It is our policy to encourage faculty to present their expertise at the national level, and Beaver will cover all expenses of faculty members presenting at national conferences or conventions relating to their discipline or field or to matters of pedagogy, curriculum, or school life/policies, provided that the invitation to make such a presentation has come at the result of a competitive or peer-reviewed application/selection process. *Faculty members interested in making presentations at any convention or conference should contact the Assistant Head of School for advice and support.*

Teachers may request funds to attend conferences from the Assistant Head of School who, in consultation with both divisional directors, will make decisions about which proposals the school will support. At times the Assistant Head of School, Head of School, or Division Director will approach teachers or members of the administration to urge them to attend a conference. Professional development funds will generally be used to train teachers and administrators to meet the needs of the school in advancing its programs. For out of town conferences, registration fees, and membership fees (the latter should be charged to departmental funds where appropriate), the school will cover the following expenses:

1. Car travel: mileage at the rate specified per current IRS guidelines; tolls (receipt necessary); parking.
2. Other travel: lowest possible airfare or train fare.
3. Special session fees (but not materials).
4. Moderately priced lodging (receipt necessary).
5. Moderately priced meals (receipt necessary).

## **FACULTY SABBATICALS**

The objective of faculty sabbaticals at Beaver is to allow teachers to renew and reinvigorate themselves after a sustained period of loyal service to the school. A restful time away from teaching in conjunction with some type of professional development will help to maintain the mental and physical health of our dedicated teachers. One teacher a year will be granted a sabbatical leave. In general, a teacher's eligibility for sabbatical leave is decided by his or her total years of full-time service to the school. In some cases, a random draw will be conducted to determine position on the sabbatical queue within hiring classes. The comprehensive faculty sabbatical description will be maintained by the Director of Finance and Operations and the Dean of the Faculty. Any teacher may obtain a copy of the comprehensive document by submitting a request to either of the aforementioned people.

## **SPECIAL SUMMER PROJECTS**

To respond in a focused manner to the most urgent academic program needs, special projects will be completed during the summer by small teams of faculty members. Teams will consist of a limited

number faculty/staff members. Each team will be responsible for devising a formal work plan that includes clear objectives, a calendar for completion, and a brief description of intended outcomes. **Participation will be considered on a first-come-first-served basis. Expertise and experience will also be considered when finalizing teams. Team leaders will meet with the Assistant Head of School, the appropriate Division Director, and project leader to review project details, expectations, and compensation.**

### *Project Topics, Summer 2011*

- Middle School planning for Project-Based Teaching
- All departments: Assessment, Rubrics, and Honors Policy
- English Department
  - Teaching English with technology
  - Planning for Poetry course
- Science curriculum development with Michael Mino and others
- Hiatt Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement
  - Relocate to current help desk in MS
  - Director of Leadership and Civic Engagement: provide leadership, vision, strategic thinking to form and empower leaders for a just and humane world and to foster positive action and improvement within Beaver and the wider community.
  - Identify external resources that will assist the administration in training and professional development opportunities designed to focus on cultural diversity as related to student achievement.
  - Establish significant and sustainable partnerships with community-based organizations that support educational practices and programs in support of diversity and equity to further develop students' skills and values related to social justice and civic engagement.

*After June 1, interested faculty members that are not selected by department chairs can submit grant applications by emailing a very brief overview of the proposed project to the Assistant Head of School.*



## 8. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND TEACHER EVALUATION PROGRAM

***NOTE: Information here is accurate as of July 2011 but is subject to change. Consult the Employee Handbook for the most up-to-date information on teacher evaluation at Beaver***

### PROGRAM GOALS

The professional development and growth program at Beaver is keyed to the central elements of the school's mission and strategic plan, and professional evaluation of members of the teaching faculty is based on the aspirations expressed in the document *Effective Teaching at Beaver*. The comprehensive Professional Development program is designed to meet the goal of helping teachers increase and expand professional competence within a progressive educational framework.

Evaluation of teachers shall be comprehensive. Observations and conferences with the department head (or Assistant Head of School in the case of a department head) will be coordinated with other evaluative processes (e.g., for coaches and teachers in the afternoon program as carried out through the office of the Dean of Students), and no decision as to a teacher's suitability for continuing employment shall be made without appropriate communication, among the Assistant Head of School, the division heads, the department head, the Director of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, the Dean of Students, the Director of Counseling, and the Head of School.

### PART I. PREPARATION

Teachers will be fully evaluated in their first and second years and thereafter every third year; teachers for whom *Expectations* have been stated in a prior year will also be subject to full evaluation. In years when a teacher is not subject to full evaluation, the teacher should expect to receive feedback on performance based on professional goals and on conversations with the Department Head and other administrators as appropriate.

Before September 6, all teachers should:

- ◆ complete the Evaluation Cover Sheet, with previous and current job information and personal and professional goals. *A copy of each teacher's Evaluation Cover Sheet should also be given to the appropriate Division Head and to the Assistant Head of School.*
- ◆ in consultation with the department head (or the Assistant Head of School in the case of a department head), develop personal/ professional goals for the year; these should be based on

the goals for Effective Teaching at Beaver. The department head or administrator may make recommendations to the teacher about particular areas where individual professional growth needs are apparent.

Before the start of classes, all teachers should:

- ◆ select a peer who will observe the teacher's classes and share in conversations related to the teacher's professional growth and goals
- ◆ review with the department head (or the Assistant Head of School in the case of a department head) the mission of the school and relevant strategic plan goals for the year

## **PART II. PEER COMPONENT**

For teachers in all categories, the Professional Growth process will include a peer. This process will include:

- at least one observation of the teacher's class by the peer, to be completed before January 15
- ◆ appropriate discussions of these observations to be held confidentially between the teacher and peer

## **PART III. OBSERVATION**

**By January 15**, the following observations of the teacher in her or his classroom should have been completed:

- a minimum of three (3) observations of 10 minutes or more by Department Head (minimum 2) and/or the appropriate Division Director. At least one of these should be scheduled and pre-conferenced.
- a minimum of one (1) peer observation, as specified in Part II, above

The teacher should receive feedback on each observation. Serious concerns will be documented by written feedback.

All observations should be documented and forwarded to Department Head, who will keep a record of observations, etc., for each teacher.

In addition, other aspects of the teacher's work (coaching, advising, student activities, professionalism, presence, and punctuality) will also be subject to observation and/or review, and the teacher should expect to receive feedback on his or her performance in all these areas.

## **PART IV. EVALUATION**

By the date specified, each faculty member will receive from his or her department head (or from the Assistant Head of School in the case of a Department Head), a document summarizing the results of the evaluation process.

The TEACHER EVALUATION provides a summative evaluation of the teacher's performance level in categories of performance, including planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities.

The Evaluation includes space for specific commentary relating to each category.

In addition, there will be a second sheet in which specifics are noted:

**COMMENDATIONS**—Areas of exemplary performance in relation to the teacher's duties and/or his or her membership in the school community

**RECOMMENDATIONS**—Areas in which the teacher should seek opportunities to improve capacity, skills, and/or performance in specific areas

**EXPECTATIONS**—Areas in which it is expected that the teacher will immediately, and in consultation with the administration of the school, seek opportunities to improve capacity, skills, and/or performance in specific areas. A teacher's failure to act in response to stated "Expectations" may result in a teacher's termination or in his or her being given Probationary status.

## **PART V. SCHEDULE**

### **A. FOR FACULTY IN PROBATIONARY PERIOD (YEARS 1 AND 2; PROBATIONARY YEAR) OR IN THE EVENT OF A SERIOUS IDENTIFIED CONCERN**

**By early February** there shall have been a meeting including the Assistant Head of School, the appropriate Division Director, the Department Head, the Director of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, the appropriate Dean, the Director of Counseling, and the Head of School to discuss performance and to complete the checklist and report form. It will be the responsibility of the Department Head to present teacher portfolios in this meeting.

**By February 1** the Department Head and peer (if desired by teacher) shall have met with the teacher to share the checklist and report; clarifications of fact may be made. The teacher will be invited to respond by letter within 5 days or to "sign off" on the checklist and report as presented. At this time the teacher and the appropriate supervisor(s) should create a draft of a specific plan for improvement of performance, to be approved as soon as possible by the Assistant Head of School and the Head of School.

February 1 is also the deadline for the notification of a teacher whose contract will not be renewed for reasons related to evaluated professional performance (as opposed to cause).

### **B. FOR ALL OTHER FACULTY, INCLUDING DEPARTMENT HEADS**

**By February 10** there shall have been a meeting including the Assistant Head of School, the appropriate Division Director, the Department Head, and the Head of School to discuss performance and to complete the checklist and report form. It will be the responsibility of the Department Head (or of the Assistant Head of School, in the case of a Department Head) to present teacher portfolios in this meeting.

**By March 1** the Department Head (or the Assistant Head of School, in the case of a Department Head) and peer (if desired by teacher) shall have met with the teacher to share the checklist and

report; clarifications of fact may be made. The teacher will be invited to respond by letter within 5 days or to “sign off” on the checklist and report as presented. At this time the teacher and the appropriate supervisor(s) should create a draft of a specific plan for improvement of performance in areas identified as in need of specific improvement, to be approved as soon as possible by the Assistant Head of School and the Head of School.

**By March 1** all documents and recommendations shall be given to the Head of School.

## **PART VI. THIRD-TERM OBSERVATIONS, etc.**

**By May 15** each teacher should have undergone one further observation by the appropriate Division Director or Department Head

There should also be an end-of-year summary meeting with the Department Head (or the Assistant Head of School, in the case of a Department Head). This meeting should include a review of professional development plans and goals for the coming year based on recommendations from February letter and on feedback from third-term observations.

## **PART VII. THE PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO**

Teacher portfolios are a tool to facilitate professional growth and focus meaningful dialogue. They are not expected to reflect all of a teacher's skills and contributions, but teachers are strongly encouraged to maintain a comprehensive professional portfolio that represents the teacher's work, professional growth, and contributions to the school community in all areas..

### **All portfolios shall contain:**

- ◆ Evaluation Cover Sheet
- ◆ The name of the teacher's peer observer

### **It is highly recommended that some or all of the following be included:**

- ◆ Sample units and lesson plans
- ◆ Copies of student work
- ◆ Other documentary evidence of professional competence (e.g., copies of student comment forms, teacher-generated materials relating to professional development and school strategic priorities)
- ◆ Any other materials deemed important and/or relevant by the teacher

Teachers who currently maintain an ongoing professional portfolio may use this as their portfolio for the purposes of professional growth and development at Beaver; such portfolios must contain the required materials (above) and should reflect in their optional contents the spirit of the Beaver program.

# SAMPLE DOCUMENT: EVALUATION COVER SHEET

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Department(s) \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE (resume may be substituted for Part 1)

Years at Beaver and positions held:

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Other teaching experience—when and where:

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Other relevant occupational experience:

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---

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Education:

Degrees or certifications held

Institution

Date

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

List recent professional development:

Program

Sponsored by

Date

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

(Continued on following page)



# **SAMPLE DOCUMENT: TEACHER EVALUATION REPORT**

**TEACHER EVALUATION REPORT FOR** \_\_\_\_\_

Initials of those completing \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENDATIONS:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

EXPECTATIONS:

DEPARTMENT HEAD \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## 9. A DICTIONARY OF CASTORIAN—THE LANGUAGE OF BEAVER

### KEY:

- “Castor” is Latin for “beaver”
- *M.S.* = *Middle School*
- *U.S.* = *Upper School*

AARON HOFFMAN MEMORIAL SOFTBALL GAME – annual softball game, seniors versus faculty, played both for fun and as a tribute to the memory of Aaron Hoffman '93, who died shortly after his graduation from Beaver

ACTs – a standardized test, equivalent to the SAT, taken by juniors and seniors as part of the college application process

ADMISSION TOURS – students seeking admission tour the school with families; tours are led by admission officers, student tour guides, or parents; tours may drop in for brief class visits—always at what feels like the most embarrassing possible moment; stay the course!

ADVISOR GROUP – (1) one’s group of advisees; (2) in the U.S., the weekly meeting or meetings of a teacher with his/her advisees, usually Wednesdays, 9:05–9:30 but sometimes and in some U.S. grades supplemented; it may also be moved due to a SPECIAL SCHEDULE

ADVISORY – the M.S. equivalent of Advisor Group; meets more often

AFTERNOON PROGRAM – (1) Castorian for the art, athletic, and service activities that take place after classes are over; (2) used in the M.S. to describe everything that happens after 1:40 P.M.

AISNE (“AYZ-nee”) – the Association of Independent Schools of New England, which sponsors a number of workshops and gatherings throughout the year

AKOM (“AY-kom”) – see ALL KINDS OF MINDS

ALL KINDS OF MINDS – program in which many Beaver teachers have participated aimed at helping teachers address learning-style differences

ALL-SCHOOL MEETING – weekly gathering of the school community on Thursday morning from 10:10–10:35; all faculty are expected to attend

ASSESSMENT – the general process of collecting evidence of student work and behavior, based on predetermined ideas of what is expected to be learned in a given course or unit of study; in an ideal “progressive world,” work tasks would be designed assessment-first

ASSESSMENTS – the evaluated work tasks and tests assigned to students to assess learning

AUTOMATED COMMENT SYSTEM – the web-based system for preparing comments

BACK OF BRADLEY – an area of classroom and other spaces in the area behind Bradley Hall; a hang-out for some students

BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT – see CURRICULUM NIGHT

*BEAVER READER, THE* – the student newspaper, available online regularly and published on paper several times each year

BIBLIOTECH – The combined functions of instructional technology and the library, a clearinghouse of help, advice, and information intended to be a resource for students and teachers alike

BIGGEST DIG – major sixth-grade assessment; winter

BIN – a one-term U.S. teaching assignment; full-time teachers teach 9 bins a year, the equivalent of 4.5 full classes

BLACK BOX THEATRE – the theatre space in the Visual and Performing Arts Center

BLOCK – another word for a class period in the U.S., designated by a letter: A, B, C, D, and X; there are also so called “lunch blocks” or “middle blocks,” the classes and other scheduled events that take place on weekdays between 11:40 A.M. and 1:15 P.M.

BOILERPLATE – the section of a comment that describes generally the work that was done in class during a term

CABARET – one of several small-scale student (and sometimes faculty) performance events

CHALLENGE – (1) relating to the issue of extending and expanding the level of thinking and understanding in student work; (2) the sheer amount of time and energy required to complete work. *The first definition is the relevant one for teachers; our task is to maximize the level of intellectual challenge for students.*

CHICAGO – the Spring 2011 Upper School musical

CHYTEN – Chyten Educational Services, with whom Beaver partners in offering standardized test preparation courses to students on campus

C.H.P. – Cultural Heritage Project, major seventh-grade assessment; spring

CLASS MEETING – in the U.S., these generally occur on Fridays from 9:05 to 9:35; teachers affiliated with a grade are expected to attend

COMMENTS – narrative reports completed for each student in each class at the end of each term

COMMITTEE OF TEACHERS – a formal gathering of the teaching faculty as a “committee of the whole” to discuss issues relating to life and work at Beaver; occurs 4 times a year

CONSTRUCTIVIST – an educational philosophy in which the purpose of teaching is to allow and give students the tools to “construct meaning” from intentionally designed experiences; related concepts are “experiential learning,” “student as learner, teacher as coach,” “student-centered learning”

COURSE PROSPECTUS – a document explaining the goals, basic content, and basic expectations for a course; a prospectus should be prepared by the teacher for each course taught

C.S.P. – Creative Scholars Project, major eighth-grade assessment; winter

CUM LAUDE SOCIETY – a national academic honor society to which Beaver belongs; student members are inducted in a ceremony in November; faculty who became members of the society in high school or who are members of Phi Beta Kappa are automatically members of the Beaver chapter and participate in the selection of inductees

CURRICULUM NIGHT (formerly “Back to School Night”) – the equivalent of “parents’ night;” each division has one, in late September or early October

DAY NUMBER – important M.S. information regarding a specific day’s “number” in the 1 through 7 rotation

D.R.F. – “Discipline Response Form”—used in the Middle School as a fairly heavy response to a disciplinary infraction, out of class or in; involves the student reflecting and writing on the situation

DRF (“derf”) – (1) a D.R.F.; (2) *v.t.*—to administer a D.R.F.

DIVISION – the Upper or Middle school

*DREAMGIRLS* – the Spring 2008 Upper School musical

DRESS-UP DAY – a day when all males in the community are expected to wear tucked-in dress shirts and ties (jackets are nice, too) and all females are expected to wear the equivalent; Cum Laude and Final Assembly are dress-up days

EARLY DISMISSAL – occasions when athletic teams are excused from class early to get to games; happens most in the Fall after the change from Daylight Saving time; students are released from class until the time on the notice, no matter what they tell you.

EIGHTH-GRADE PROMOTION – a ceremony honoring eighth-graders at the end of their middle school careers; held on the morning before Final Assembly, the Friday before Commencement

E.I.L. – the Eastern Independent League, Beaver’s varsity athletic league

ELECTIVES – (1) M.S. interest-based activities that meet twice a week; (2) U.S. courses, usually one term in duration, offered to students who have completed the required course sequence in a discipline

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS – somewhat rhetorical and/or open-ended questions that define the issues and/or set up the conceptual framework of a course or unit of study

EXPLORE – a standardized test administered to eighth graders each year; part of the ACT family of tests

EXTENDED TIME – some students with diagnosed learning disabilities are allowed to have up to 50% extended time on tests and examinations; see the student’s LEARNING PROFILE and the Extended Time list provided by the Academic Services department

FINAL ASSEMBLY – Beaver’s awards ceremony, held on the Friday before Commencement

FOUNDERS DAY/CUM LAUDE – in late autumn, a rare formal celebration; features induction of new members of the Cum Laude Society and a faculty speaker; a dress-up day; known primarily as “Cum Laude day”

FOYER – the entrance to the school just inside the building in front of Bradley Hall; sometimes the site of student shenanigans and a place where active faculty presence is valued

GLBTQ – abbreviation for “gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and/or questioning”

G-MAIL – although GMail is a popular email service outside of school, Beaver specifically relies on Gmail through its Google Apps system as the school’s official email system

GOOGLE DOCS – Beaver’s online system for individual and collaborative student work

GOOGLE SITES – the Google service that teachers are required to use to house online information for students

GRADE DEAN – the faculty member designated as a leader in overseeing the life of a particular grade level

GREEN SLIP – used in the Upper School as a response to a disciplinary infraction

G.S.A. – Gay/Straight Alliance, student-led group devoted to issues relating to sexuality, sexual orientation, and community; one of the largest “clubs” at Beaver

HABITS OF MIND – desired cognitive and affective dispositions of students

HARVEST FEST – an autumn Saturday featuring various student-run activities, athletic contests, and several PA-run activities; student-activities are organized by classes and occasionally by clubs

HEALTH OFFICE – destination and resource for ill students, on the lower level, east side, of the main building section. Staffed from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. each day; students should not be there or be sent there other than during those times.

*HELICONIAN, THE* – the student literary and arts magazine, usually published twice a year; *Heliconian* staff also sponsor several cabaret-type events during the year, often coinciding with the appearance of a new issue

HIATT CENTER FORxxxx nn,n,n,nm,

HOLIDAY HOOPS – a varsity girls’ and boys’ basketball tournament sponsored by and held at Beaver in December

HOUSE CONCERT – one of several small-scale student (and sometimes faculty) performance events

iL@B (formerly “Progressive Education 101[A]” and “PT@B”) – Introduction to Life at Beaver, the orientation program for new faculty and staff held in August during the week prior to opening faculty meetings

INCOMPLETE – grade given to a student who has legitimate reason for not having completed work during a term; see page 65 of this handbook for details on the use of this grade

INDEPENDENT STUDY – U.S. students in grades 10–12 may elect to do independent academic study for credit through the Independent Study program; students must find a faculty advisor for each study and complete an application for approval by the Director of College Counseling and Special Programs

INTERIM REPORTS – see PROGRESS REPORTS

JAZZ CAFÉ – one of several small-scale student (and sometimes faculty) performance events

KELLY SUB – Beaver hires substitute teachers from Kelly Services; if you are going to be absent, let your department head know as soon as possible and s/he will arrange for a Kelly sub

LANGUAGE WAIVER – students with serious language-based learning disabilities are sometimes allowed to “waiver out” of the graduation requirement involving foreign-language study

LANGUAGE WORKSHOP – a M.S. language skills course for students who are not ready to commence the study of a foreign language

LATE-WORK STUDY – in the U.S., Late Work Study (LWS) is assigned to students who have not completed homework or who may need extra time on a test; occurs Monday–Thursday, 3:45–4:45 in the Library. A student is excused from LWS for a game or performance but not for a practice or rehearsal; a student must report to and stay in LWS even if they complete their work before the time is over. Unexcused absence from LWS is treated as a class cut: the teacher issues a Green Slip.

LEAD TEACHERS (“leed,” not “led”) – a small group of teachers who have been willing to pilot new concepts in curriculum and assessment and who are sometimes asked to share the experiences and expertise with the rest of the faculty in workshops and other settings

LEARNING PROFILE – a document prepared by the Academic Services department detail the nature of a student’s diagnosed learning issue and how the student, the student’s family, and teachers can support the student in his or her work

LEARNING PROFILE NOTEBOOK – a binder given to each teacher containing the Learning Profiles of all students with diagnosed learning disabilities; remember to treat the contents of this binder as extremely confidential

LGBTQ – see GLBTQ

LONG BLOCK – the 120-minute periods in the U.S. schedule

LOUNGE – area in the lowest floor of the original building containing some lockers, several vending machines, and various disreputable furniture; some students habitually hang out in the Lounge

MONDAY FACULTY MEETINGS – each Monday there is a faculty meeting of one sort or another; the schedule is posted on line; all faculty are required to attend punctually

MORNING MEETING – (1) M.S. event on Monday mornings, 10:15–10:35 A.M.; (2) any morning gathering of a division or the full school; faculty are expected to attend all morning meetings

NAIS (“en-eh-eye-ess”) – (1) the National Association of Independent Schools, the “governing body” for independent schools in North America; (2) refers to the Annual Conference of NAIS, held in late winter

NEASC (pronounced in various ways) – the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the body that accredits Beaver

NEW ENGLANDS – tournaments sponsored by the New England Prep Schools Athletic Council at the end of each athletic season

NURSE’S OFFICE – see HEALTH OFFICE

NuVu (“new view”) – a term-away program for U.S. students held on the M.I.T. campus and focusing on creativity and problem-solving; Beaver students enrolled in

NuVu continue to participate in the afternoon program (but not athletics, except in special circumstances) at school

OCTOBER PROGRESS REPORTS – brief checklist/narratives completed on each student by each teacher about half-way through the Term I

ORIENTATION TRIPS – events by each grade to orient and welcome students and create a sense of common class purpose; held during the week of school

P.A. (“pee-ay”) – the Parents’ Association; sponsor of several events during the year to build community and to support the mission of the School through volunteer efforts

PARENT CONFERENCES – two days in the fall when parents/guardians are invited to sign up for 15-minute conferences with each of their children’s teachers; the scheduling is done administratively; in the U.S., a one-day round occurs in January for students who are starting a new class in Term II

PEER LEADERS – group of trained U.S. students who meet with eighth-grade students to discuss various issues and concerns relating to life, the universe, and everything

PLAN – a standardized test administered to tenth-grade students in the spring; part of the ACT family of tests

PoCC (“pee-oh-see-SEE”) – the annual National Association of Independent Schools People of Color Conference in early December, usually attended by some Beaver faculty and students

PROGRESS REPORTS – brief checklist/narrative reports issued at midterm for students who are new to a 2-term Upper School course or who are in academic difficulty (C- or below) or whose performance is otherwise noteworthy for bad reasons or good

PROGRESSIVE ED 101A – see iL@B

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING – a case-study method of presenting material that promotes inquiry and student “ownership” of materials and skills being taught; involves gradual unfolding of case information and a structured discussion protocol

PROFESSIONAL DAY – a day when there are no classes but on which faculty are expected to be in attendance for professional development

PROJECT MANAGEMENT – a structured method of creating medium- and long-term group work to maximize accountability and effectiveness of the learning experience.

PROSPECTUS – see COURSE PROSPECTUS

PSAT – a standardized “pre-SAT” test administered to tenth- and eleventh-grade students in October; for eleventh-graders this test serves as the qualifying exercise for the National Merit Scholarship program

P-T@B – see iL@B

*RENT* – The Spring 2009 Upper School musical

ROLL CALL – a faculty meeting in which student progress is reviewed

RUBRIC – a grid-like evaluation tool in which both the criteria for evaluation and levels of achievement/mastery are clearly stated; the rubric is specific to the piece of work, and is ideally a) generated with student input and b) distributed as the work is being assigned

S.A.L.s (“salz”) – see SOCIAL ACTION LEADERS

SEVEN-THIRTY CONFERENCE – conference, generally with parents or guardians, regarding a student about whom there is a particular concern, held at 7:30 A.M.; the advisor is usually the emcee, and some or all of the student’s teachers may be invited; the student may be present, as well; teachers are notified by email if they are invited; if invited, attend, punctually

SKILLS – abilities, know-how, and basic knowledge that students can apply to a problem in order to achieve critical understanding and make meaning

SNOW DAY – rare and coveted phenomenon when school is closed for weather-related reasons; “too many” is a bad thing, sometimes; no direct faculty notification—depend on radio, television, or internet

SOCIAL ACTION LEADERS – U.S. students who meet regularly under the auspices of the Hiatt Center to discuss and to take leadership roles in the development of programming related to diversity and social justice

*SOUTH PACIFIC* – The Spring 2010 Upper School musical

SPECIAL SCHEDULE – dreaded occurrence when the schedule is altered for a day to accommodate a special event of some sort; announced via email

SPORTS DESSERT – M.S. event to celebrate end of a season in athletics and other activities; awards give, speeches made; ice cream consumed

STUDIO MODEL – an approach to education focused on creative and often collaborative problem-solving through directed brainstorming, multiple iterations of ideation-prototyping-testing feedback loops, and performance exhibition; the primary methodology of the NuVu program

SUMMER SPECIAL PROJECTS – funds available for teachers to work collaboratively on new initiatives, projects, or to develop new resources; payment is made as a per diem stipend

TEAM 67 – the M.S. teachers who teach both sections of grade 6 and two sections of grade 7

TEAM 78 – the M.S. teachers who teach one section of grade 7 and all three sections of grade 8

TEN THINGS – an online course in the use of Web 2.0 tools to enhance student classroom learning

TERM (see TRIMESTER) – one of the three major divisions of the year

TIAA-CREF (“tie-KREF”) – the pension program in which Beaver participates

TRIMESTER (see TERM) – one of the three major divisions of the year

TUESDAY FORUM – weekly U.S. student gathering on Wednesday from 10:10 to 10:35, used for student presentations as well as announcements. U.S. faculty are expected to attend; formerly known as Wednesday Forum

TUTORS – a number of tutors work in the building at Beaver during the school day, although they are contracted by families; teachers may contact tutors in reference to a student’s progress

VPAC (“VEE-pak”) – the Visual and Performing Arts Center

WINTER CARNIVAL – an event, usually in February, that involves an ice-sculpture event (by grade level) and various athletic events

X-BLOCK – a one-hour block occurring Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday afternoons in the U.S. and used variously for certain courses and extra help

