



State of the School Report

AIM

Academy In Manayunk

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

July, 2010



The Journey Becomes a Destination at AIM!

The journey traveled by families and students with learning differences is often challenging and changing. There are multiple paths to take and many forks in the road. Decisions at each bend require many considerations.

As our oldest class, the class of 2012, now enters its junior year in high school at AIM, it is clear that the journey for these students has become a destination unto itself. The activities that have been developed for the students and those that are planned for their last two years before graduation are nothing short of a direct path to college entrance and success. This school year, their sophomore year, six colleges visited the campus and spoke to the students. Our rising juniors were prepared for college interviews by Mr. Keith Wilford through careful preparation and practice of sample interview questions and thoughtful responses. Mock interviews were conducted by the administration of AIM who were impressed by the preparation and poise of these individuals. Adding in our JV sports program including soccer, basketball, softball, golf and crew, these programs allowed our high school students to demonstrate

incredible talents in multiple venues. The AIM Wolves or Wolfpack as they call themselves with pride, had several winning seasons across these sports at both the JV and Middle School level. Theater and dance rounded out the offerings along with hockey and volleyball. Future plans include internships and college courses for these students prior to graduation!

Perhaps the best testament to the vision of AIM as a destination school came from the parents of both the 8th grade graduation students and the 5th grade graduates into middle school. During the 8th grade graduation, each student read a heartfelt speech of thoughts and reflections from their time at AIM. The display of confidence, courage, and vision of taking on the responsibility in high school of setting the path to college was incredible. Each clearly saw the Academy In Manayunk as being a fulfilling destination where they could continue to improve their reading and thinking while exploring their strengths and talents. As one 5th grade parent expressed, "My child is so incredibly confident and focused on his future now. I cannot imagine him being anywhere else."

Quote from Nancy Hennessy, Nationally Acclaimed Educational Leader

"As you step through the doors of the Academy In Manayunk, you know it is a special place. It is evident in the student artwork and their products that are everywhere, the sense of belonging on the faces of the students and the consistent sounds of learning echoing from every classroom. Learning is the work at AIM, not just for students but also for staff. As a result of the

ongoing commitment to their learning, the educators at the Academy In Manayunk have been able to create instructional environments that reflect the research, the science of teaching and learning, and allow them to attend to the unique needs of each of their students. Our students need more schools like this one!"

Educational Outreach and Global Impact

Since the start of this fiscal year, over 500 individuals have received training from the educational leaders at the Academy In Manayunk! Under the leadership of Nancy Blair, a Wilson® and Just Words® Trainer, teachers have been trained in the Wilson Reading System including 40 elementary and middle school teachers from the Medford School District. Michele Walker, our lead Foundations® trainer, has conducted a total of five Foundations

workshops for teachers in kindergarten through third grade. Pam Greenblatt and Jackie Galbally teamed up to offer multiple sessions of the Early Literacy Workshop this year blending speech and language development with reading strategies for the early education classroom. The educational impact on our region is indeed priceless as we continue the mission of disseminating best practices in literacy.

AIM to Host the PA Branch of the International Dyslexia Association Annual Conference & Educational Leadership Symposium on October 7-8, 2010

Updates to both programs continue to provide for incredible excitement and opportunity for educators attending these events. AIM is waiting to hear final confirmation that Mayor Michael Nutter will attend the October 7, 2010 Educational Leadership Symposium to officially welcome our nationally recognized panel of presenters including Louisa Moats, Barbara Wilson, Nancy Hennessy, and Sandra Jones. Board Immediate Past Chair,

Sam Greenblatt, has graciously provided the meeting space at his highly acclaimed R2L Restaurant at Two Liberty Place as the venue for this exciting event for university and school administrators. The program committee for the PBIDA has completed the agenda and line-up for the October 8, 2010 Conference that will host 500 educators at AIM's Upper School facility.

AIM in the News and in Print

The Academy In Manayunk has been in the news and in print multiple times this spring and will continue into the summer publishing schedule. AIM was featured in the Philadelphia Social Innovation Journal on May 11. This newly launched on-line journal highlighted the financial impact of teaching students to read and to aspire to college and beyond. Educating teachers to focus on the important skill of reading in our schools was also outlined. The Spring/Summer issue of Focus, the PBIDA journal, featured two articles written by AIM personnel: *Teaching Teachers of Reading* by Pat Roberts and *Just Words*, by Nancy Blair. Both articles have received outstanding response. The next issue of Focus will feature an article by Dr. Grace Ashton of our psychology team on the topic of working memory.

This summer, the National IDA Perspectives magazine will feature an article by Pat Roberts and Chris Herman which will showcase the innovative Teacher Scholar

Graduate Program launched with Saint Joseph's University. The summer issue of the Learning Disabilities Journal published by the Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) will be entirely devoted to the career of Sally L. Smith and The Lab School of Washington® arts-based learning model that will forever be Sally's legacy. Three articles by AIM personnel will be featured highlighting the replication of the model at the Academy In Manayunk, the importance of arts-based learning, and one of our Lab teachers who knew Sally well. We will forward these articles as they become available.

The visit by District Attorney Seth Williams was single-handedly arranged by the determination and tenacity of one of our fourth grade students. He believed strongly that DA Seth Williams needed to visit AIM and that it was important for all students to hear his story. This inspiring visit took place this May.

Strategic Focus for 2010 - 2011

Strategic Issue #1 - Faculty and Staff

The research continues to support that the second most influential factor in student achievement and success after genetics is the preparation and training of the teachers who teach these students. The focus at AIM continues to be on the professional development and training of our incredibly talented educational team. There is no doubt that the Academy In Manayunk leads the way in providing the highest percentage of overall budget to the education and training of its faculty. In 2009-2010, that percentage was almost 5% of the overall budget and that percentage will increase as plans are underway for our PAIS accreditation and the formation of Professional Learning Communities under the leadership of Nancy Hennessy via on-site and on-line training opportunities that will link our faculty to researchers and practitioners from around the world. We are committed to providing opportunities and additional benefits to our faculty and staff.

Strategic Issue #2 - Endowment

We are now on our way to adding significantly to our endowment as our anonymous donor has offered to provide a second \$100,000 match to our endowment campaign. We have allocated \$18,000 from the AIM for Kids golf outing on June 1, 2010 to the match for that day which was a 2 for 1 match by our donor. That will net us a total of \$54,000 for that one day added to the already raised \$20,000 from the AIM for the Stars Gala last November. This will allow us to add \$38,000 towards the original match for a pledged amount of \$238,000 towards our AIM endowment. Final determination from the IRS will hopefully once again approve contributions from IRA's for individuals over 71 years of age tax-free to charitable institutions thus providing another option for donors. The United Way campaign kick off is a few short

months away and United Way contributions can be directed to the Academy In Manayunk via our United Way account number, #45961.

Strategic Issue #3 – Facilities

A vision for a single campus destination for the Academy In Manayunk's grade 1-12 lab school and its ever-growing teacher training program is being explored in an exciting property for lease in Whitmarsh Township, Montgomery County. The property is River Park 2 at 1200 River Park Road in Miquon. It is 70,000 square feet (currently 60,000 square feet are available) that would be ample space to house our projected 250 students and our state-of-the-art professional development training space for educators and university teachers in training. Sitting right at the base of the R-6 Septa line at the Miquon train station, this location provides the easy access to accommodate our current student population. Our newly launched van service from R-5 train stops to AIM and ultimately to this new site, further provide the much needed transportation accessibility for families, faculty and professionals.

Although the building itself at River Park 2 is in beautiful condition and represents a unique blend of old and new, a capital campaign will be required to build out the classrooms, club rooms, arts spaces, and academic areas for our students. It is currently anticipated that the capital campaign will be a minimum of a Phase 1 campaign of \$3.75m with a \$2m endowment campaign for a total raise over the next 3-5 years for Phase 1 of \$5.75m. Phase 2 will be outlined to include the building of a gymnasium and soccer field on the site for an additional \$2m in the future. The proposed lease includes a buy-out option in the year 2017 which would represent a Phase 3 Capital Campaign if exercised.

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