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HEAD OF SCHOOL

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Head Lines

DOUBLE BOTTOM LINE

In the 30 years that separate my first year as a teacher to now, boarding schools have become my Hotel California – I’ve never been able to leave. I’ve taught, coached, and lived in dorms with thousands of kids, eaten countless meals, watched countless games, all the while living in a brief series of three odd little villages. I suppose I got into working at schools because I didn’t want to stop going to school.

A perplexing deflection point came perhaps a decade-and-a-half ago. I went from sitting on committees to chairing them and soon from teaching to administering and, having just begun my third year, to leading Brewster. It was an odd, unintended, unexamined evolution that resulted from my following my erratic curiosities.

Now I delight still in the myth, rite, and sacrament of independent schools but see them also through another lens, as entities embedded in a market and threatened at least a bit by the 21st century and all it brings. And while I still delight in my connections with students and evaluate the quality of a Saturday afternoon JV soccer game and the crust of pizza at Friday dinner, I think also about troubling economic, cultural, demographic, and perceptual trends that I must be cognizant of as head of school. In this way, I’ve come to understand the power of the notion of the **double bottom line** on which I must always be focused as head of school.

The double bottom line: the measure of our ability to attend to mission within the context of societal needs while also thriving in a diffi-

cult marketplace. Keeping focus on the double bottom line – on both mission and market – makes for relentlessly exciting and meaningful work for all involved.

Over the past few years, I’ve thought and labored much with a talented group of trustees, senior administrators, and faculty and staff in coming to terms with how we’ll shape our double bottom line. In the process: We’ve ...

- crafted a compelling, differentiating, mission-driven vision we believe will serve us long into the future.
- developed a strategy process that is already bearing fruit in the form of policy, program, and facilities changes.
- radically re-imagined the administrative structures and processes to give us clear means to develop and operationalize compelling strategies in a manner that is both inclusive and fast-moving – and in the

process developed a potent organizational structure up to the task of managing our ongoing evolution.

- started engaging all Brewster constituencies in this meaningful work.

These have been a dizzying few years.

Our vision, strategy process, administrative structures, and engagement with others are predicated on a core belief: we are currently serving our students well and are thus improving from a position of strength. Moreover, we recognize that the basic conceit of our practice – supporting and challenging a cognitively diverse population in a manner that liberates strengths of each individual by virtue of our unique, student-centered approaches – will not change. We neither wish for profound upheaval in what we do nor do we strive to populate this school with a narrow slice of the cognitive universe of students because doing so will not prepare any of our students for the world they will enter and ultimately inherit.

Rather, our vision is fixed laser-like on transformation at four levels: **transforming the students we serve** ever more effectively by improving our core teaching practices as articulated in the Brewster Model; expanding the boundaries of our teaching practices and thus **transforming all dimensions of student experience**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week – in the dorms, on the playing fields, in the theater, arts studio, and school community; **transforming our relation to Wolfeboro and the surrounding areas** to both bring more worthy local students to our campus regardless of their ability to afford the education and to entreat our students to learning and service opportunities; and **transforming how other schools think about their agency in the lives of their students** by engaging in the broader conversations happening globally about the future of education. I’m inspired daily by these notions and believe in their profound value for our school and for education more broadly.

We have an impressively skilled and devoted senior administrative team (see page 7) tasked with organizing this work and a faculty excited to participate. We look forward to informing the Brewster family of our progress as it unfolds and engaging it at key points. We are excited for your feedback as you help us determine the way education should be. / BA /

