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Transition going well, educator says

by RON AARON EISENBERG

For many, following in the footsteps of John Webster after his 32 years as headmaster at San Antonio Academy might prove a daunting task, but his successor sees the job as building on a lasting legacy.

Under Webster's leadership, enrollment and financial contributions to the private school at 117 E. French Place soared. He stepped down at the end of the 2016-17 academic year.

The school's new headmaster, Clint DuBose, views replacing Webster as an opportunity to continue previous successes while looking ahead.

"I'm just not one to pass up opportunities," DuBose said.

DuBose served as head of the middle school at Annunciation Orthodox School in Houston. He'd been there since 2007.

He earned a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Houston Baptist University.

He wasn't looking to move anywhere else, unless it was San Antonio. So when he got the call from a recruiter to gauge his interest in talking with academy officials about becoming headmaster, he didn't hesitate.

"My wife and I had decided long ago, if an opportunity came up to move to



Sixth-grader Danny Peavy shows new San Antonio Academy Headmaster Clint DuBose his painting. DuBose took over at the private school this summer, coming from the Houston area. Educators at the 130-year-old school say the transition has gone well. Photo by Collette Orquiz

San Antonio and it was a good fit, we'd give it serious consideration," he said.

A former high school football player, DuBose — who stands 6 feet 2 inches tall — compared taking over from Webster to stepping into the cleats of Joe Montana, the former NFL Hall of Fame quarterback.

DuBose's personal philosophy is, "Don't live your life in fear. If it is meant to be, it will be. Just go for it."

DuBose was born in Bogalusa, Louisiana, in 1969. His dad was preacher at a Baptist church. They soon moved to Texas, which has been his home ever since. He and his wife, Anne, have two children — a boy and a girl.

Both attend Saint Mary's Hall, a coed, private college preparatory school on the North Side for children ages 3 to 18.

The academy, located in the Monte Vista Historic District, serves boys from prekindergarten to eighth grade.

In a message to academy parents and faculty, DuBose said, "It is humbling to know that I am now part of a school whose rich history and traditions span 130 years, and I will work tirelessly to live up to the standards set by the great leaders that have come before me."

One test of his success will be the response of parents and faculty to his selection.

"It is up to the new headmaster to make his own indelible mark on SAA, establishing his own traditions and practices, and forging his own relationships with parents, faculty, alumnae, donors and, most

importantly, students," said Bonny Osterhage, whose son graduates in May.

English teacher Priscilla Power, a native San Antonian, has been at the academy for 17 years. Her family has been connected to the school since the 1920s, when her dad attended.

"Clint is the man for this job. I trust our search committee and school board who brought him here," she said.

She met DuBose a year ago during the search process.

Patrick Atkerson is the academy's learning specialist, working there for 11 years.

"The challenge of successfully taking over from John Webster was a concern we all had," Atkerson said. "To make Clint's transition easier, John has intentionally stayed away from the school to reduce the tendency to compare the two men."

Atkerson believes the transition is going well.

Molly McAdams, academy board chairwoman, and Steve Chiscano, past board chairman, were deeply involved in the search that brought DuBose to the Alamo City. Both are parents of academy students.

DuBose embraces the culture of the school — where every child is known and valued, they said.

"Clint has bought into that," McAdams said. "Clint is completely his own man. He has a very definite moral compass. That guy is the sincerest person you will ever be around."

Chiscano said he was impressed with how quickly DuBose connected with students and parents after he arrived on campus in July.

For more on the academy, visit www.sa-academy.org. 