



*Vista Newsletter #1  
June, 2006*

### ***The Vista Academy Graduate***

Summer 2006 is an exciting time in the continuing development of Vista Academy. Over the next few months, we will finalize curriculum choices, install projectors and two Smartboards (interactive whiteboards) in the science lab and future middle school classrooms, define extracurricular and specialist offerings, and launch the [vistaacademy.org](http://vistaacademy.org) website. We are also pleased to announce that Vista Academy will host an Open House on Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 – 3:00.

Much of the planning and vision for Vista will be through the lens of the Qualities of a Vista Academy Graduate. The nine traits below provide tangible, evidence-based characteristics upon which to build our school. These Qualities, developed by our Education Committee, embrace the wide-ranging talents of Vista students, and support our mission and philosophy.

#### **A Vista Academy Graduate...**

Explores subject matter in depth and breadth, and identifies areas of talent and passion as a basis for further study and potential career paths

Makes astute and insightful connections among ideas and concepts, and translates knowledge within the context of real world applications

Possesses organizational skills and habits, demonstrated in planning, time management, and prioritizing of responsibilities

Solves problems independently, using a variety of strategies to evaluate choices and make sound decisions

Exhibits positive social and interpersonal skills, allowing for effective collaboration, communication, and conflict resolution

Engages in meaningful leadership opportunities

Values the enriching qualities of a diverse community, and appreciates the perspectives of others who hold divergent views

Is developing a realistic awareness of self and an acceptance of personal strengths and weaknesses

Is well prepared for success in high school, equipped with the habits and advanced academic skills of confident and committed students

Beginning with this newsletter, I will feature a few Frequently Asked Questions about Vista Academy.

### **Do OWS students automatically have a place at Vista if they want one?**

*All OWS students in good standing will be welcomed to Vista Academy. They will not be required to take the Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE). We will begin accepting applications for the 2007-2008 school year in the late fall of 2006.*

### **How will math levels be established for Vista students?**

*Vista students will have strong math skills. That being said, they will demonstrate different needs in terms of challenge. Each student will be assessed carefully and placed in an appropriate instructional program.*

*Mathematical talent must be identified through a range of measures that go beyond traditional standardized tests. Measures may include observations, student interviews, and open-ended questions. Recognition should be made of the fact that mathematical talents can be developed; they are not just something with which some students were born. Interesting tasks must be presented that engage students and encourage them to develop their mathematical talents.*

I hear that effective writing skills are critical for high school, and increasingly demanded by colleges. How will Vista emphasize writing?

*Strong writing skills are indeed critical to high school success. Vista is committed to fostering expository and creative writing in all students. Likewise, critical thinking, as explored through literature and research, is extremely important. Broad writing skills will include poetry, personal narratives, and persuasive compositions, as well as carefully organized essays and research papers. Literature will include world classics along with themed books appropriate to students' developmental levels. Etymology will strengthen student vocabulary and provide meaningful connections in language usage.*

I welcome your Vista questions anytime. Please email me at [timc@ows.org](mailto:timc@ows.org).

Thank you very much. I hope your family is enjoying these early days of summer.

Tim Costello  
Middle School Head