Dear Parents,

Spring is in the air and there are many wonderful things happening at The Country School. Back in November 2010, we conducted a Parent Survey as part of the self-study for the CAIS (Connecticut Association of Independent Schools) re-accreditation process. I shared the findings of the survey in a Parent Town Hall meeting in February of this year. However, as the meeting had to be cancelled and rescheduled a few times as a result of numerous snow storms, not everyone was able to attend. Therefore, I thought it would be helpful to summarize the findings of the parent survey in writing to you.

CAIS Parent Survey Results
The following are the statements that were presented and the percentage of responders who \textit{Agreed} or \textit{Strongly Agreed} with it. The balance of response was either \textit{Undecided}, \textit{Disagreed} or \textit{Strongly Disagreed} with the statement.

1. \textit{I believe that the school’s mission is matched by what is actually happening in the program and that the school does what it says it does.} 89.4\%
2. \textit{The Mission Statement represents what you appreciate most at The Country School.} 95.4\%
3. \textit{I find that the admission process is effective in enrolling students who are appropriate and likely will benefit from their experience at the school.} 67.7\%
4. \textit{I believe that the school offers a variety of experiences to reflect the diversity of the students enrolled and the multicultural nature of society itself.} 63.7\%
5. \textit{I believe the school actively takes into consideration the individual needs, learning styles, and characteristics of students by providing developmentally appropriate programs and activities to help students achieve their potential.} 69.7\%
6. \textit{I feel that the teachers provide a positive learning experience for my child, and that throughout my child’s experience at the school he/she has found thoughtful and skilled faculty.} 93.9\%
7. \textit{I find that policies are administered fairly and reflect the core values of the school.} 84.6\%
8. \textit{I believe that the methods used to assess my child’s work at the school are clear, fair, and helpful.} 86.1\%
9. \textit{I believe that the school is a safe, clean, well-organized place with sufficient resources to meet the needs of my child and it nurtures learning and mutual respect among students and teachers.} 94\%
10. \textit{I find that the school has an effective system of communicating important information to the parents.} 83.4\%

Overall, the parent survey was very positive and it was helpful in highlighting areas in need of further study. This year, efforts have been focused on improving our admission process and our differentiation of instruction and programs. Thank you to the faculty and staff and the many parents who participated on the various self-study committees. It was a terrific full school effort. We look forward to the CAIS Visiting Team being on campus May 1\textsuperscript{st}- May 4\textsuperscript{th}. 

April 2011
Policy Updates
In another area of school administration, we have been working to update various school practices and policies. One policy I want to bring to your attention is the updating of the Discipline and Behavior Policy. This area is an important one and we believe this updated policy will provide our school community better clarity of our expectations and processes.

Behavior Expectations
At The Country School, in accordance with our mission, we strive to maintain a positive and consistent approach to discipline, calling upon students, teachers, and parents to work respectfully and cooperatively to maintain a trusting and healthy environment for learning.

There are three simple rules that we know children will be able to memorize and easily recite. Our goal is to develop a common language that can be called upon at any time.

1. Be kind to others
2. Respect everyone’s right to learn
3. Take responsibility for yourself and your school

Students are expected to internalize our school’s core values of: respect, caring, honesty, and responsibility. Student behavior should reflect respect for himself or herself, fellow students, teachers, and the school community at large. Further, student behavior should not disrupt or hinder the teaching/learning process at any point of instruction.

If a student is disruptive during the learning process, the teacher will use verbal reminders of appropriate behavior. If necessary, teachers will address infractions as they see fit including talking with the student about what they did, why it was wrong, and what they should do in the future.

When appropriate, students are sent to meet with the Lower or Middle School Director.

Our process is:

1st Occurrence: We talk to the students, may impose an in-school consequence, and may call the parents. We expect students to learn from their experience and to not repeat the inappropriate conduct. If a student engages in conduct with another student with what we believe is an intent to cause physical injury or pain, the parent(s) is/are contacted and the student may be sent home from school for the day.

2nd Occurrence: We call the parents, may request a meeting, and disciplinary action may be taken.

3rd Occurrence: We call the parents, may request a meeting, and disciplinary action may be taken, up to and including suspension or dismissal from school.
At The Country School, any behavior that threatens the physical, emotional, or intellectual safety of any member of the community is deemed mean-spirited, unacceptable, and therefore prohibited.

Examples of unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:
- Acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate, threaten, intimidate, or bully
- Inappropriate use of the Internet and other forms of technology to denigrate or demean another student(s)
- Physical violence and attacks on another student or groups of students
- Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethnically-based verbal abuse or gender-based put-downs
- Damage of possessions, extortion, or stealing money or possessions
- Exclusion from peer groups within the school

This applies to student behavior while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity, or on a school bus. In addition, unacceptable behavior which occurs outside of the school setting may be addressed by school officials if deemed appropriate.

We encourage any student, parent, or other witness to report conduct that violates this policy as soon as possible to any of the following: Lower School Director, Middle School Director, or Head of School.

Prompt and reasonable investigations of alleged acts of unacceptable behavior will be performed by the Lower or Middle School Director as directed by the Head of School.

Students may be permanently dismissed from school when their presence at the school is deemed a negative influence or impact to the reputation of the school. Further, the school believes that a positive and constructive relationship between the school and a student’s parent(s) or guardian(s) is essential to the fulfillment of the school’s mission. Accordingly, the school reserves the right to dismiss or not to reenroll a student if the Head of School concludes in his/her sole judgment that the actions of a student’s parent(s) or guardian(s) undermine school policies or procedures, make such a positive and constructive relationship impossible, disrupt the school community or otherwise interfere with the school’s accomplishment of its educational purpose.

This policy will be inserted into our school handbook. If you have questions or concerns about these two important topics, as always, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We appreciate your support and partnership in the important work of providing Education that Lasts a Lifetime.

Sincerely,

Martha Gates Lord
Head of School