



DAVID B. HARMAN
Headmaster

August 9, 2010

Dear Poly Prep Parents:

Greetings from a sweltering Poly Prep campus flush with countless children racing around in our day camp each vying for their precious time in the outdoor pool. We certainly seem to be well on our way to record temperatures this summer, which has done nothing to dampen the enthusiasm and spirit of our children enrolled in one of the specialty camps or summer programs on campus. I hope you and your families have also found ways to beat the heat in the city and are enjoying a restful and restorative summer.

The administration and staff have been busy completing the final details of planning for the start of another school year, including some last minute hiring due to anticipated maternity leaves of absence. We have a small but extraordinary group of new faculty joining us and some marvelous one-year or one-semester replacements. As many of you know, we have made a conscious decision in recent years to hire more experienced and proven teachers, preferably with advanced degrees. We are confident that over time this policy has greatly improved the overall teaching at the school as more experienced teachers have lent their expertise and wisdom not only to their students, but also to their colleagues in their respective divisions and departments. We will post a list of the new faculty with a brief bio for each within the next several weeks.

In spite of early nervousness and anxiety about the economy and possible effects on enrollment a year ago at this time, we enjoyed a very strong year in all respects. We were fully enrolled at the beginning of the last academic year and experienced a great year in admissions with our yield (return on admitted students) increasing significantly. As I write this, we are projected to reach our targeted number of students for this fall, if not slightly ahead.

We enjoyed a marvelous commencement in June with our esteemed speaker being John Sexton, the President of New York University. I noted in my introduction of him that in my time at Poly we have sent over 55 graduating seniors to matriculate at NYU. This year's graduating class, the Class of 2010, truly distinguished themselves in all ways, but especially in academics and college admissions. The class graduated with the highest SAT and AP scores on record at Poly and set a new bar for academic excellence. Moreover, members of the class were admitted to virtually all of the country's top colleges and universities, including but not limited to: Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, Chicago, Michigan, Duke, Brown,

Wesleyan, Amherst, Penn, Cornell, Dartmouth, NYU, Johns Hopkins, Haverford, Boston College, to name just a few. Probably, the highlight of the college admissions process was having four students admitted early to Brown. Some of you may have seen the admit rates listed for the most selective colleges and universities this past year in the recent *New York Times* Education Supplement. When you look at some of those daunting statistics, Poly's seniors did very well indeed. We are more confident than ever that even the most selective institutions continue to value highly students from Poly as not only well prepared academically, but also as young people of character with proven leadership skills.

Steven Andersen, Associate Head of School, has been busy with his crew improving and renovating many important spaces on both campuses. At the Lower School, we have renovated the Nursery B classroom and have plans to improve the outdoor play space even more. The biggest project on our Dyker Heights campus is the improvement to the 92nd Street entry, which will now be considered the main entry to the school. We have postponed this project for a couple of years due to the recession, but felt it was vitally important to move ahead with it this summer. An expanded and improved entry provides all of us with safer and easier entry and egress, much stronger security presence, and an attractive first view of the school. We hope to move eventually about 26 cars to alternative parking in the back of the campus to allow an uncluttered view of the pond and the 9/11 Memorial Garden beyond. After efforts were not successful to have the city place a traffic light at the Seventh Avenue entry, we moved ahead quickly with the 92nd Street Plan.

Additionally, Poly's "Tall White Tower" is scheduled to have extensive work with waterproofing, new paint, and most importantly, alignment. It has begun to tilt a bit, and while images of the Leaning Tower of Pisa and a potential Dyker Heights tourist attraction were tempting, we feel Poly's primary image and symbol should be plumbed straight up and down!

We have added new paint, ceiling, and lighting to the large ceramics studio, which completes the overall renovation of the visual arts areas. Finally, the studios and physical spaces reflect the quality of the remarkable work produced by our students and the quality of instruction by their teachers, year in and year out. Lastly, we have plans in the fall to paint completely, improve ventilation, and upgrade lighting in the large gymnasium. While these projects are for the most part smaller in scope than years past, the impact they will have is enormous, as we have seen from comparable work in the past.

We believe that Poly's two campuses and overall facilities are truly second to none among the city's schools. We are absolutely committed to continual improvement and renovation. Cost, however, of renovation and new construction is always a factor. We plan to ask capable present parents to help fund these smaller projects either individually or collectively to relieve the capital budget for other essential or desired demands and enhancements. On the short list at the moment are improvements to the Middle School science facilities and the addition of individual music rooms for practice and instruction.

Having completed my tenth year as Headmaster at Poly Prep, it is most gratifying to step back and see the many improvements at the school over my tenure. They represent the collective efforts and great teamwork of many people. At the same time, the many challenges and opportunities that are ahead come into sharper focus. To help us plan accordingly, we have engaged in a strategic planning exercise to give us direction moving forward. You will hear details of a revised school mission statement and revised strategic plan in the fall.

We look forward to welcoming Stephanie Hull, the Head of Brearley School, who is chairing a five-year NYSAIS (New York State Association of Independent Schools) visiting committee who will be at Poly in early March 2011 to assess progress made since the large ten-year committee visited five years ago. Think of this as a five-year check up on a ten-year plan. It is a wonderful opportunity for the entire school to reflect on what we are doing well, regain focus, and set priorities for areas in which we need to improve.

Enjoy the remaining weeks of summer. We look forward to welcoming teams back for preseason training in a couple of weeks.

I hope to see all of you at the opening of school BBQ Tuesday night, September 7.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David B. Harman". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.