Welcome Parents!

I would like to inform you that Spark actually has programs for you, too ... programs and discussions that, I think, will provide you with ideas about the potential of education and the possibilities that can be realities for your children.

For example, widely banded around in the press nowadays is the topic of early college admission and the plusses and minuses of this approach. Featured here will be some schools that actually enable their students to take full advantage of college curricula, due to their very close relationships with their affiliated colleges. They can give you the inside scoop about the experiences they have with their own, very capable, students.

And then, there is this school that regularly sends its students to places like Julliard and RISD. Yes, this school is well-known for preparing its talented students for further study in the fine arts. However, it is also not unusual to find its alums at Brown and other very selective liberal arts institutions. Find out how a program can leverage the appreciation of the arts into making better students of us all.

Now, on to another topic. Did you know that before the age of educational specialization and high-speed computational capabilities, everybody had their smart sons and daughters undergo a curriculum of classics? That's because there is almost no other language that enables the understanding of logic and reasoning as do ancient Greek and Latin. Classics teaches you how to think – it made Santayana a better philosopher, Keynes a better economist, Darwin a better biologist. And, it can make your child much more appreciative of his/her interests, whatever they may be. Discover why this “forgotten” subject should be “unforgotten”.

Finally, we all know the benefits of being around students who genuinely care about learning. In fact, the benefits appear obvious. But what may not be so obvious are the efforts to enable an environment that sustains interest, learning and respect. A head of school will tell you the known, and unknown, ingredients that make a community of gifted learners hum.

I almost forgot to mention the exhibits and the chance to learn about summer programs, independent schools for pre-schoolers or ones for just girls, and scholarships for students with exceptional gifts. But I leave you to discover those yourselves.

We hope to see you at MIT Spark and welcome you to our program for parents, 12:00 Noon - 5:00 pm, at Twenty Chimneys, 3rd Floor, at MIT’s Student Center, 84 Massachusetts Avenue.

Following is a Preliminary Schedule of the Parents’ Program at MIT Spark. For updates on the Parents’ Program, check back on this site and be sure to pick up a complete schedule at the Spark Registration on Saturday, March 13th.

Patsy Kumekawa

Scholar Search Associates
12:00 Noon – 5:00 PM, Saturday, March 13, 2010
Twenty Chimneys, 3rd Floor, Student Center, 84 Massachusetts Ave.

12:00 Noon – 5:00 PM - Exhibits and Information

12:30 PM – The Importance – and Challenge - of Community for Gifted Students: One Educator’s View

School environments that support and engage students can engender a love of learning that may be sustained a lifetime. For a gifted student, however, to be among those who are inspired by the world of ideas and who genuinely value intellectual engagement is not only beneficial, but may also be a key ingredient for healthy development and well-being. Join a headmaster as he discusses a community for the gifted that he knows well - as a former teacher, as an admission director, and now, as a headmaster - and discover the attributes that might be applied to any learning environment.


1:15 PM - Early College Alternatives

Recent press hoopla has given great visibility to the idea of early college admission and the handful of states that are encouraging their academically strongest high school juniors and sophomores to advance to college without taking the final years in high school. But is this a viable educational approach? In his talk, the director of admission of the institution that was the first in the country to be devoted to early college (and remains amongst the nation’s outstanding and innovative liberal arts colleges), will explore three kinds of early college models and the kind of student who most benefits from this experience.

Presenter: Steven Coleman, Director of Admission, Bard College at Simon’s Rock.

2:00 PM - A Panel Discussion: Studying at College as a High School Age Student

Join administrators and a student as they discuss life and learning on college campuses for 16-18 year-olds. What works, what doesn’t, and why.

Panelists: Paige Brewster, Director of Admission and Financial Aid, Boston University Academy, Steven Coleman, Director of Admission, Bard College at Simon’s Rock.

3:15 PM - Arts Thinking; Academic Power

Walnut Hill School provides an education tailored to serious and passionate young artists. Critical thinking skills are fostered through habits of mind encouraged across the academic and arts curriculum. This interactive presentation will demonstrate pedagogy that connects habits of mind between the arts and humanities program.

Presenters: Julie Faulstich, Academic Dean and Steve Durning, Humanities Faculty, Walnut Hill School for the Arts.

4:15 PM - A Classical Curriculum in Theory and Practice

How can a curriculum rooted in the classical tradition be relevant in the 21st century? And how does a core curriculum that includes two years of either Latin or ancient Greek enable in-depth study of both the humanities and sciences? The Director of Studies from a highly regarded day school will address these questions, and more, in a discussion of teaching and learning in a rigorous academic environment.

Presenter: Michelle Cannon, Director of Studies, Boston University Academy.
INSTITUTIONS AT THE SPARK 2010 PARENTS’ PROGRAM

- Bard College at Simon’s Rock
- Boston University Academy
- Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University
- Commonwealth School
- Institute for Educational Advancement
- Miss Hall’s School
- The Sage School
- Walnut Hill School for the Arts