

**Charter Day
April 6, 2009
Concluding Remarks
By Jim Newman, Head of School**

Thank you, everyone, for taking time from your busy schedules to join us for this remarkable milestone in the history of our school. It is an honor for us to be in the State Capitol Rotunda. I am sure our 12th, 8th, and 4th grade students who are present will remember this morning. Many of our other students are watching this morning's events via the Capitol's live feed.

Speaking last at this morning's celebration puts me in the desirable position of addressing the future of Harrisburg Academy. When a school reaches the 200th anniversary of its chartering and 225th anniversary of its founding, what will its future be?

Well, as I'm sure many Academy teachers would say, that's a two-part question. The first part of the question is, what will others expect of Harrisburg Academy? The second half is, what will the Academy community expect of itself?

The future expectations of others – particularly community leaders of our Capital region – can be best summarized by the remarks of David Black, not our student who spoke earlier, but the other David Black, the CEO of CREDC, the Capital Region Economic Development Corporation.

Two years ago when we announced that Harrisburg Academy was authorized to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, David Black said Harrisburg Academy was a “regional resource.” By this he meant the Academy served the needs of our metropolitan region by being a positive and progressive educational choice for parents. The quality of our accelerated educational program, he said, would help attract and retain community leaders. The expectation is that Harrisburg Academy will continue to develop students who have achieved a high degree of academic success, can analyze complex problems, and pose practical and creative solutions.

In addition, the expectation is that Academy students, because of their own experience in playing a significant role in a small school community, will understand the initiative and commitment required to make Central Pennsylvania productive, vibrant, inclusive, and committed to the benefit of all.

Those are high expectations for a school community, but we willingly embrace the challenge. Much like John Harris, we understand the role that a high-quality progressive education can directly have on the positive growth of a community.

But, for a student to become a productive stakeholder in his or her local community requires something more. Twelve to 15 years ago, at the dawn of our improved understanding of globalization, it was common to hear people say (and their bumper stickers to read): THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY.

Now the stakes are higher because of the dramatic speed at which our world changes and because we realize the imperative to be continuously “globally-minded” and “globally-integrated.” Now Academy students must be prepared to: **BOTH THINK AND ACT, BOTH LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY.** This means the Academy must continue to partner with other schools and community groups in the greater Harrisburg region, our students must provide ever-increasing amounts of community service, and we must share our best educational practices with other school communities.

And, what are we expecting of ourselves? A lot.

Harrisburg Academy is an ambitious school community that demands continuous improvement and places a high value on excellence in all facets of our school operation. That’s just one of the many reasons I’m proud to be the leader of this school community.

The Academy school community will continue to strive to uniformly achieve our mission – that is, to encourage each student to reach his or her full potential, and to provide tools and teach skills that will prepare our students to thrive and succeed in college and in their future endeavors.

And our school community will expect that we achieve our 10 core values and animate them consistently. Allow me to mention just a few:

- We aspire to set a standard for academic excellence and continue to be an educational leader in central PA.
- We instill the values of respect and responsibility for others that will lead our students to become productive and caring members of their communities.
- We promote each student’s growth in integrity, creativity, self-worth, resilience, leadership, global awareness, and critical thinking skills.
- We are committed to an inclusive culture that celebrates diversity, multiculturalism, and mutual respect.
- We are committed to a caring and supportive workplace where faculty and staff members are encouraged to pursue and achieve their professional and personal goals,
- We recognize that close working partnerships among students, parents, alumni, faculty, staff members, trustees, and the greater Harrisburg community are vitally important to achieving our mission.

These select core values explain why our ambitious five-year strategic plan calls for a dynamic instructional and curricular program, and why at the heart of that plan is our goal to continue to make an Academy education as “accessible and affordable” as possible for students with high academic ability and potential. Like all independent schools throughout our country, Harrisburg Academy not only embraces a student and employee population that reflects our global diversity, our goal is for those populations to feel thoroughly included in a unique social environment.

For the last 225 years, our small school community has contributed much to this region and has reason to be proud of the quality of education it has provided and the accomplishments of its alumni. The future of Harrisburg Academy is as bright as ever! Many, many people have given long years of service and their resources to ensure that the Academy is an educational leader today. Some of those individuals are here today. Much of our current success is a result of their commitment to, and pride in, the Academy, and we salute them and others.

In closing, I want to mention how grateful we are for the support we've received from the greater Harrisburg community – its families, businesses, and foundations. In so many ways, Central Pennsylvania has supported lifetimes of learning at Harrisburg Academy, and we deeply appreciate their sustained goodwill for our school community.

Thank you again for joining us, and onward and upward for Harrisburg Academy!