



# **IBSC Baltimore June 2007**



**Student leadership: theory to reality**

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# Student leadership: theory to reality



What do we mean by 'leadership' in this context?

Giving boys the opportunity:

- to take responsibility for the organisation of events (planning, publicity, financial, logistics, evaluation)
- to be creative in bringing forward initiatives that will be of benefit to the school community
- to act as positive role models for younger students
- to effect real change as the leaders of teams
- to convince others of their ideas through the development of presentation and inter-personal skills



# Student leadership: theory to reality



## Attitudes

- Define expectations (boys, parents, staff)
- Learning can be a very teacher-centric activity in the classroom. The same teachers who need to be encouraged to 'let go' in the classroom, will require convincing that boys should be allowed to lead.
- When students have an idea, we must not take it and implement it. Even if we could do it more quickly, we must insist that they take responsibility.



# Student leadership: theory to reality



## Attitudes – some thoughts

- Why would boys want to take the lead if their teachers are prepared to do everything for them?
- Our default response should be ‘yes’.
- We must be prepared to let them get it wrong.



# Student leadership: theory to reality



## Structures

- Schools must provide the structures within which student leadership can thrive.
- The School Council (beloved of UK school inspectors) is too tokenistic. We need a more complex web of leadership opportunities.
- We need to devote staff time (and a budget) in order to help boys turn ideas into actions.



# Student leadership: theory to reality



## The LGS prefect structure

- Final year students select 15 of their peers to be School Prefects.
- Senior boys put themselves forward for election. They can express an interest in 2 distinct roles from those listed below:
  - There is a Head Boy and 2 Deputies.
  - There are 12 further prefect portfolios:
    - *Academic enrichment; Careers; Charities; Co-Curricular; Common Room; Environment; Marketing and External Relations; Music; Social and Food; Sport; Student Mentors; Wellbeing*
    - *However, we also encouraged boys to create new portfolios.*



# Student leadership: theory to reality



## The LGS prefect structure

- Headmaster and Head of Sixth Form (Upper School) interview the top 15 to confirm portfolios.
- (We reserve the right to make further appointments if a boy with leadership potential comes to our attention.)
- We have added for Sep 2017, a 'Spirituality' Prefect as one of our senior boys made a compelling case for the need to give spirituality a greater profile in our community.



# Student leadership: theory to reality



## The LGS leadership structure for senior boys: our concerns

- Only 15 leaders in the school out of 1000 boys???
- Network of sub-committees is the next project. A Prefect will lead a committee of boys taken from each year thinking about their particular area of school life.
  - Environment, Social and Food, Charities, Music have got ahead of the curve and are already operational.
- Considerable need for training of staff to be effective coaches and mentors. Teachers know how to lead a class in its learning, and how to advise an individual student in how to improve his grades. Not all, however, are expert in empowering boys to think for themselves.





# Student leadership: theory to reality



## Mentorship

- Teachers to act as leadership mentors: coaching approach
- We must resist the urge to tell our students what to do! We must re-wire our problem-solving brains!
- *“How do you think you could .....?”*
- *“How could you improve on this next time?”*
- *“What are the pros and cons / opportunities and threats?”*
- *“How are you going to use the skills and enthusiasms of your team?”*



# Student leadership: theory to reality



## Preparing for leadership

- What is a leader?
  - School assemblies
  - Year 12 citizenship (PSHE) programme







# Student leadership: theory to reality



## Preparing for leadership

- What is a leader?
  - School assemblies
  - Year 12 citizenship (PSHE) programme
- Leadership coaching: we are working with a company in the UK called ['The Unreasonables'](#) to help our Y12 and Y13 move away from 'group-think'.
- Each student leader needs a teacher mentor
- Weekly meeting between Head Boy, Deputies and Headmaster
- Coaching must underpin the student-teacher relationship throughout the school.



# Student leadership: theory to reality



## The leadership smörgåsbord

- School Council and committee representatives
- CCF (Combined Cadet Force)
- Voluntary service (primary schools; nursing homes; charity shops)
- Academic mentors
- Peer mentors
- Leadership of subject clubs and societies
- Public speaking and debating
- Buddies to new students
- Sports leadership awards and sports captaincy development programme
- School duties
- Students involved in interviewing staff



# **Student leadership: theory to reality**



Over to you! What have been your experiences of successful student leadership?