



The Emery/Weiner School

Connecting with the Past, Preparing for the Future

Highlights - Kotarot

A quarterly report on news and happenings

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FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

DR. DAVID A. PORTNOY, HEAD OF SCHOOL



*Dr. David A. Portnoy,
Head of School*

Dear Emery/Weiner Family,

Thank you all for the warm, wonderful welcome Shira and I have received from the entire Emery/Weiner Community. From students to teachers, alumni to parents, grandparents to community leaders, we feel, in many ways, that Houston has been our home for a long time. There really is something to famous Texas-style hospitality, and we are so grateful for the ways in which you have opened your hearts and your homes to us in the short time we have been here. And now that the hot summer months are behind us, we are looking forward to a lovely fall season!

A SEA OF BOW TIES

Perhaps some of you may have walked right by me at the Annual Picnic or at many after-school or weekend athletics or arts events because, according to one parent, I wasn't wearing my signature bow tie. It's a funny thing to be recognized by something like that, but I suppose it is a kind of shorthand by which people know me. Thankfully, and owing to the creativity and hard work of so many, I was surrounded by a beautiful "Sea of Bowties" during our Opening Ceremonies the first day of school. Indeed, there were literally 500+ students, faculty and alumni there to greet me, adorned with their own bow ties, and I was and am deeply touched by such a kind and welcoming gesture. Ever since then, I get daily sartorial questions about the bow ties, such as: "Do you match them with your shirts like regular ties?" (I try, but am not always successful) and "Why the bow tie?" (They tend not to get in the way, which is why pediatricians, architects, academics and surgeons have historically worn them. No tie flopping around for young patients to grab onto, or to obscure drawings or books, or get caught in the muck of the operating room). In any case, I have taken the community's clever and curious remarks about such



things to tie in (pun intended) nicely to the wonderful spirit and engagement that marks the Emery/Weiner Difference so often spoken about here on Stella Link.

A FOCUS ON COMMUNITY

As I have written in our weekly E-Flash, I will be spending much of the next semester and my first year getting to know the EWS Community from the inside and out. With its talented and diverse student body, its energetic and professional faculty and staff, and its rich traditions, EWS beautifully mixes General and Judaic Studies, rigor and relaxation, seriousness and just plain fun. Indeed, I have already found our students to be among the brightest, most personable and fun-loving as any young people I have been privileged to meet in my many years in schools. And so much of that interpersonal talent derives from the strong and loving families from which they come to us each day. When I meet parents after already knowing a student (or vice versa), I am struck by how nicely families tend to fit together here at EWS.

Beyond our campus, I have had opportunities to visit with many of our synagogue clergy and leadership, as well as with other Jewish Day and independent schools in our area. Knowing that so many of our terrific kids come to us from Beth Yeshurun, Shlenker, and many other schools, we have made strong efforts to show our gratitude for providing such excellent foundations for our EWS Middle and Upper Schoolers. Indeed, the word on Houston – which we heard about well before moving here – was that folks in Houston "get along and play well together." I am thrilled to report that I am seeing proof of that strong Community each and every day.

If you have not been to our campus in recent months, or even if you are one of our regulars, please stop by and visit. And if you are here during the school day, chances are pretty good I'll be the one in the bow tie.

Shalom, *Dr. David A. Portnoy*, Head of School