



October 16, 2020

Open letter to the Baltimore Design School Community

From: Fred Lazarus, Chair of the BDS Board of Trustees

Earlier this week you received a letter from Jacque Hayden and me announcing that Principal Valentine would not be returning to BDS after her leave and that Darrin Brozene has been appointed interim principal until a principal is appointed. At this time, I wanted to write to all of you to express both my personal and the Board's deep appreciation for what Principal Valentine has done for BDS and our students during her four-and-a-half year tenure.

When Principal Valentine came to BDS in May of 2016, BDS was a troubled school. We were experiencing major disciplinary issues; the morale of the staff and teachers was low and the academic performance was weak. During her tenure, all of that has changed and now BDS is recognized as one of the leading schools in Baltimore City. Recently Principal Valentine received the Heart of the Schools Award for her leadership and what she accomplished as a principal. Under her leadership, the school's graduation rates, college acceptance rates, and daily attendance are among the best in the city. The rate of growth in test scores for our middle school students is also among the best in the city. The list of recognitions that BDS has and is receiving is long and well deserved. These accomplishments are due to the leadership of an outstanding principal and the team that she has mentored and empowered.

Thanks to Principal Valentine, we are a different school today and a far better school. A school that recognizes the potential of all of our students and is working with all of them to reach their potential, and a school where the staff and teachers are respected and supported. Yes, BDS has become a very special place — a wonderful family. This is Principal Valentine's legacy and we are all so very grateful.

As we move ahead to the next chapter at BDS, we are committed to build on this legacy, to maintain the culture, and to embrace ideas and initiatives which will allow us to do even more to support the development of each of our students. We are fortunate that the team which Principal Valentine has developed will be here to provide leadership into the future.

Thank you for being a part of the BDS family and for your dedication and support.