



THE *All American* **NEWSLETTER**
AMERICAN SCHOOL®

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Best-selling author Christopher Paolini visits his alma mater

by Jeff Cox

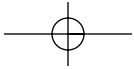


Christopher Paolini (left) and American School President Gary R. Masterton display Christopher's latest best-seller, *Brisingr*, during his visit to the school in late 2008.

Christopher Paolini has taken millions of readers to the faraway kingdom of Alagaesia in his novels *Eragon*, *Eldest* and *Brisingr*, but until recently, the best-selling author had never set foot inside his own high school.

That all changed, however, when Christopher visited us during a break from a recent book tour. He was impressed with what he saw, including diligent instructors writing personalized feedback on students' exams.

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“It was nice to have hand-written comments on my exams,” Christopher explained. “Instead of simply saying ‘nice work’ the instructors told me why I did well or why I made a mistake. It was nice to have that interaction.”

Corrections on Christopher’s exams were rare, though. He graduated with a nearly perfect grade point average in 1998 at age 15, and his sister Angela followed suit in 2000. Their hard work paid off in the form of an accredited high school diploma.

“When my parents were researching schools, they wanted to find one that awarded students an actual high school diploma,” Christopher said. “The American School does that, it’s been established for so long and it’s cost-effective, too.”

Christopher earned his diploma by taking courses in a variety of subjects, studying them on his own and working entirely at his own pace. Our program gave him the skills and the flexibility he needed to further his career as an aspiring author.

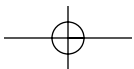
“The experience of learning to teach myself and work at something every day without someone telling me to work on it prepared me for the real world,” he said. “Especially with writing, you don’t know how to write until you write. You have to have internal discipline. That’s something the American School taught me.”

In our storied history, we have taught more than three million students, including other celebrities like Donny and Marie Osmond, Jessica Alba and Andre Agassi, but we refuse to rest on our laurels. Rather, we work tirelessly to develop new courses, and students can now view their academic records and participate in monthly chat sessions in the school’s Online Student Center.

“I’m really happy the American School is not standing still with its course materials,” Christopher said. “Looking at the Build Your Writing Skills course (which debuted after he graduated), I wish I was able to take this.”

Even without that course, Christopher’s writing skills continue to blossom. Soon he will begin work on his fourth book, and, when his *Inheritance* series concludes, he plans on taking a break before writing other types of literature.

“Christopher is an impressive person,” American School President Gary R. Masterton said. “To have done what he did at a young age is a phenomenal testament to his learning, homeschooling and us.”



American School holds 111th Annual Meeting

by Jeff Cox

The 111th Annual Meeting of American School Trustees and Corporate Members was a time for those present to reflect on the School's many accomplishments during the past year and look ahead to an exciting 2009.

One such accomplishment was the completion of a self-study in preparation for a September visit by an accreditation team from CITA (the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation). The accreditation team was impressed not only with the self-study's findings but also with the large number of School employees who played a role in the process. Shortly after their visit, the School received word that it had been officially reaccredited by CITA.

A renewed commitment to student and counselor service was at the heart of many of the School's other endeavors and manifested itself in a number of ways. Updated and expanded graduation requirements are better preparing students for college or the workforce. The Online Student Center gives students and counselors secure, around-the-clock access to grades and other academic records. Students can now receive their grades via e-mail, and counselors can receive weekly student progress reports via e-mail. Graded exams and study materials are being sent in a more timely fashion, too, thanks to a new labeling system for outgoing mail and a new primary carrier for book shipments.

The School also undertook a number of new marketing initiatives in the past year. These included appearances at several national education conventions and at Homeschooling Day at Six Flags Great America just north of Chicago, articles on homeschooling Web sites and in mainstream print media, a new toll-free number for pre-enrollment inquiries, and the production of three television commercials which are currently airing on cable systems in the Chicago area.

American School President Gary Masterton remarked that these and other accomplishments stemmed from the School's "conservative-progressive" approach to decision-making, a process which, above all, puts the student first. Treasurer Vince Immordino reported that, in spite of challenging economic times, the School's very good asset/liability ratio and sound investment strategies will allow the School to continue to make such student-first decisions for many years to come.

Trustees Fred Aho, William Hunding, John Kemp and Mary McKeown all agreed that the School had a successful year, and, along with General Consultant Cher Tufly, are excited to see what 2009 brings as the School begins its 112th year of service.

Sharon Maco celebrates 40 years

by Jeff Cox



Sharon Maco (third from right) is joined by members of the American School's Executive Committee on her 40th anniversary as an American School employee.

American School employee Sharon Maco recently was honored for 40 years of continuous service. Sharon's family and fellow staff members were on hand to join in the celebration as American School President Gary R. Masterton presented Sharon with several special gifts befitting the occasion, including a handsome diamond pin, a corsage, and a certificate recognizing her outstanding achievement. Her awards and accolades are well-deserved. Sharon has been a dedicated employee longer than many current staff members have been alive, and her smile, cheerful attitude, and willingness to help

wherever needed are valuable assets around the office. All of us congratulate Sharon and wish her much success as she continues to serve our students in the years to come.

New year brings new departments, policies

by Jeff Cox

The New Year has brought several changes to American School departments and policies, including the following:

Effective January 5, the Student Service and Customer Service departments have been merged into a single department, known as Student Service, under the supervision of Robin Fisher. Meanwhile, the Admissions department has been reorganized into two distinct departments. The new Admissions department, under the supervision of Registrar Donna Stimac, will process high school and Independent Study enrollments and handle inquiries about those matters. The Admissions department will also have the responsibility of evaluating transcripts. The newly-formed Fulfillment department, under the supervision of Minnie Koske, will organize and distribute enrollment packets, folders and similar documents created when a student enrolls.

In addition, the following prices are now in effect for duplicate textbooks, study guides and examination booklets.

Textbook or Instruction Book: \$40
(For Essential Math I and II and Understanding English I and II, the charge will be \$20 if only one book is needed.)

Study Guide: \$10

Examination Booklet: \$5
(Planning Your Career, Sociology, General Science and Earth Science only)

If a student requests duplicate copies of examinations and needs to complete more than half of the exams in a course, the student must purchase the publication that has the examinations in it: either a study guide or examination booklet, depending upon the course. The item(s) will be sent only after payment is received, either by mail or by credit card over the phone.

Thank you for your cooperation with these matters. We are confident that these changes will allow us to more effectively serve you in 2009 and beyond.

All American Staff
Public Relations
Coordinator- Jeff Cox

Editor- David Perry

Letters to the Editor should be sent to:

David Perry, Editor

All American

American School

2200 East 170th Street

Lansing, Illinois 60438
