Confidence New Addition To Hyde School Symbol

By RICHARD S. KIMBALL

BATH—The Hyde School's symbol is a coat of arms displaying five impressive words on a scroll beneath a shield: Courage, Integrity, Leadership, Curiosity and Concern.

Treated both as principles and goals by students and faculty members alike, the five words have apparently served the private boys' school well during its five years of operation.

But now maybe the school should hire a heraldist to add a sixth word: Confidence. For an emphasis on confidence keeps appearing on the Hyde School scene. Here a boy is trying to gain self-confidence; there a faculty member is trying to instill it. And school administrators are so confident of their product that they are offering a money back guarantee to parents who send their children to the summer program offered by Hyde this year.

However, the greatest profusion of confidence may be found in the office of Headmaster Joseph W. Gauld. At a recent interview held to discuss the admission of girls to Hyde, Gauld exuded confidence carried almost to the point of audacity.

YES, HE AGREED, this is a tough time for private schools, and many are having trouble sustaining their size. But Hyde will maintain its enrollment of 115 boys next year.

In fact, 12 girls will join the student body. The school will become coeducational for a while, but only for a while. In two years, the dozen plus next year's complement will form the nucleus for a new girls' school attached to Hyde.

Why add girls to a school which now seems more masculine than most with its emphasis on athletics, outdoor skills, and leadership?

This is not a new idea, said Gauld. "We've always planned to take girls, with the thought we would eventually have two schools and two headmasters. And this year we're really trying to find good ones, girls who can take a leadership role."

But that is not the only reason, said Gauld, his confidence becoming more apparent by the minute. Hyde itself will have a greater chance to exert leadership in the world of education if it has a girls' school connected with it. And Hyde "is capable of finding the educational system this country needs. . . We aren't there yet, but we're on the road."

What makes Gauld so confident? One thing is the evaluation written last spring by an evaluating committee from the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, a committee with representatives from such outstanding institutions as Phillips Exeter Academy.

The school "is sound," the committee wrote. Its program "is effectively leading to the established goals. We were impressed by the spirit of the place, the dedication and vigor of the faculty and administration, the loyalty and integrity of the students. We appreciated the candor and frankness of all the members of the school community with whom we spoke. Older institutions could learn something from this relatively new school about the education—in the broadest sense—of boys:

"If courage, curiosity, concern, integrity, and leadership can be instilled, achievement up to the level of the individual's potential will follow. It is significant that Hyde School awards a certificate to indicate that a student has successfully completed the academic requirements, and a diploma to show that in addition to fulfilling the academic requirements he has reached a level of personal awareness and growth."

Another factor underlying Gauld's confidence is his experience with individual students and with the school as an organization. He discusses individual success stories with evident pride; a recent case in point was a member of the swimming team who finally met the challenge of performing a difficult dive for the first time in competion. The steps leading to that drive were many. The entire school rallied behind him to give him courage, and for a while the boy was prevented from attending classes because he would not try.

GAULD HAS FOUND this academic year particularly satisfying as the school recovered from a breakdown of its honor code, a breakdown which occurred last spring when a number of boys admitted to smoking marijuana.

The incident was traumatic, but the school has matured because of it. "We don't have an honor system now. We don't need one anymore. The school is beyond that kind of stuff."

Now the school operates on an undefined but well-established system of trust, a trust which is also at the core of the school's emphasis on character development.

And the emphasis on character development is at the core of educational changes being tried this year.

"We're working on character development," says Gauld. "Why not formally develop a character curriculum?"

Gauld himself has attempted to lead the way to educational changes by developing a math course with emphasis on individualism and on teaching students to think, not to do mathematical computations. "I figured if I could teach these kids to think, then they ought to be able to learn math on their own."

So Gauld has been trying to help the students learn how they think, how they solve problems, much as he tries to tell them—in a larger sense—how one "changes from a boy of 15 to a successful adult of 40."

Midway through the first attempt, the course was failing, "a hell on wheels." But "partly because I was headmaster, I had the courage to go on and by the end of the course the students were achieving as well as any group I've ever taught in terms of their own ability."

Other teachers are now being asked to develop new approaches at the school, for only such attempts will allow Hyde to fill its leadership role.

At the moment, Hyde is busy looking for next year's students—both boys and the new coeds. But in the long run, it is looking for the key to American educational improvement.

And Gauld believes the school will find that key. "If you stay here, you've got to believe that," he tells his teachers.

If Gauld and Hyde fail, the cause will not be lack of confidence.

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Interview with Joseph W. Gauld, headmaster.

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