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cording to the National Coalition of Girls' Schools, in Concord, Massachusetts. The concept also has some surprising backers. In March, the Bush administration announced plans to let public-education systems create single-sex classes, grades, or schools. Under the plan, which is supported in the U.S. Senate by several women from both sides of the aisle, such programs would rely on voluntary enrollment.

Still, the trend hasn't won universal acclaim. The American Association of University Women has long argued that coed schools often shortchange girls, but says the solution lies in equitable, rather than separate, education. The National Organization for Women agrees. "Parents of girls are right to want their daughters to have the best education possible," NOW president Kim Gandy, the mother of two young daughters, wrote in 2002. "But do we want to teach our children that avoiding problems is the best way to deal with them?

Schools must create an environment in which both boys and girls can and do participate fully in school activities. Sex segregation is not the way to ensure this." The Julia Morgan School, too, had its critics. "They asked, 'Are you starting a finishing school? Why would you want to start such an anachronism?'" DeBare recalls. In response to a fundraising pitch, one founding member's sister wrote a three-page letter opposing the concept as "artificial." Like others, she warned that such an institution wouldn't prepare girls for the "real world," which includes boys. "Some people said '[Girls] need to learn how to be tough—and that means going to a coed school,'" DeBare reports.

THOSE CONCERNED that the Julia Morgan School would resemble some WASPy Victorian institution needn't have worried. For starters, the student body reflects the founders' emphasis on diversity. Forty-six

percent of this year's students are girls of color; 30 percent receive financial aid to help cover the \$14,000 tuition.

The curriculum, developed by Ann Clarke and her staff, is highly integrated. For instance, if students are studying feudal Japan in a history class, they'll also study Japanese textiles, etiquette, and music. There's a strong emphasis on math and financial literacy; in one course, students decide in teams how to divide an imaginary \$500 investment among stocks, bonds, and real estate. And it's as hands-on as the founders wished. In a science class, girls build a simple robot and dismantle coffee pots and pencil sharpeners to see how they work. There are no letter grades; instead, the students receive detailed evaluations.

The school itself is housed on two floors of a former dormitory at Oakland's Holy Names College, at the top of a steep wooded hill overlooking the Bay Area. A construction crew turned dorm rooms into classrooms and offices, but left much of the original plumbing in place; the desk of academic dean Rebecca Field, Ed.M. '94, is actually a sink covered by a piece of plywood. Staffers used chunks of dorm-room walls to build a large art table and filled classrooms with castoff furniture. Incoming students bring and decorate their own chairs.

The students themselves are just as casual; most dress in jeans and sweatshirts. They call teachers, and even school director Clarke, by first name. And they're encouraged to ask questions and express their opinions. "Girls have been taught to please," Clarke says. When students don't seem to be saying what they mean, "you'll hear our teachers say things like, 'Is that what you *really* think—or are you just saying what you think I want to hear?'"

Seventh-grader Shadai Smith, 12, says she went from being "softspoken to outspoken" in her first year at the Julia Morgan School. "I like being able to speak up for what I want," she says. Laura Southworth, a 13-year-old eighth grader, agrees. "It's easy to be open here," adding that students generally support each other, rarely gossiping or fighting. And because they have brothers and male friends at home, they don't think a coed school would offer anything more. "People are always asking how you survive without boys. I don't think it's really a problem," Hannah

Alumni College: Play Ball!

An upcoming Alumni College seminar will explore the financial side of America's favorite sport, followed by a field trip to Fenway Park for an afternoon game. "The Business of Baseball," to be held on Saturday, May 29, will start with panel discussions at the Harvard Club of Boston at 374 Commonwealth Avenue. The morning agenda includes:

Peter Carfagna '75, J.D. '79, general counsel for International Management Group, a Cleveland, Ohio-based, sports marketing and management agency, who will discuss the agent's perspective.

Tom Werner '71, an owner and chairman of the Boston Red Sox, who will address the owner's point of view.

Janet Marie Smith, an architect and team vice president of planning and development, who will talk about Fenway's past and future architectural design.

Later, attendees will head to Fenway to see the Sox host the Seattle Mariners.

Pre-registration is required. To sign up on-line, visit www.haa.harvard.edu and click on "Alumni College." For more information, e-mail haa_alumnicollege@harvard.edu or call 617-495-1920.



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